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New York

Co-Chair: Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki ..... (President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session)
Co-Chair: Mr. Joseph Deiss ..... (President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session)

The meeting was called to order at 9.05 a.m.

High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals

Agenda items 13 and 115

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Draft resolution (A/65/L.1)

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) (*spoke in French*): I declare open the High-level Plenary Meeting of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly, convened in accordance with resolutions 63/302 of 9 July 2009 and 64/184 of 21 December 2009 and decision 64/555 of 15 April 2010, under agenda item 13, "Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields" and agenda item 115, "Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit".

Statements by the Co-Chairs

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) (*spoke in French*): The strength of the community is measured by the well-being of the weakest of its members. That phrase is close to my heart; I also quoted it during my acceptance speech (see A/64/PV.93). It is taken from my country's Constitution and it perfectly expresses the principle that solidarity is the foundation of any community. It acknowledges that we have a moral duty to care about the well-being of others. It seems to me that this aptly sums up what the international community undertook to do when it established the Millennium Development Goals.

At the Millennium Summit in 2000, we adopted the most ambitious programme ever launched to combat poverty. In so doing, we demonstrated that all the peoples of the United Nations formed a single community and that no one had the right to remain indifferent to the abject poverty and suffering of others. By launching the Millennium Development Goals, the General Assembly gave great hope to millions of men and women; now we must meet their expectations.

We must achieve the Millennium Development Goals. We want to achieve them. And we can achieve them.

In addition to the action taken by Governments, we have also seen unprecedented momentum on the part of civil society and the private sector. It must be stressed that this is remarkable and it is vital to continue working together. Today, however, I first call upon each person here — as individuals, heads of State or Government and Members of the United Nations — to reaffirm the commitment made at the Millennium Summit and declare that we want to create today the conditions needed to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

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There are eight Goals and 15 years to achieve them. One of the great merits of the Millennium Development Goals is that a clear programme was established, with targets and a deadline. Where are we now, after 10 years of efforts, at a time when the world is recovering from the economic and financial crisis?

The Secretary-General's excellent reports and the documentation produced by the various United Nations entities give us the answer. The picture is mixed. Real progress has been made in some respects. For instance, poverty has declined in overall terms. But we are lagging behind in some regions, such as in sub-Saharan Africa. We are also falling short in some areas, especially with regard to eradicating hunger, reducing child mortality and improving maternal health. Additional efforts are therefore needed.

The economic and financial crisis has also undermined progress, but the preceding decades of strong growth showed the strong potential of the global economy. We must be confident. We have the know-how and the resources to succeed, and we can do it. But that requires commitment from donors and commitment from beneficiaries, leading to a genuine partnership. That partnership must also include civil society and the private sector. If we want to succeed, we have to do it together.

This High-level Plenary Meeting opens under excellent auspices. The document that we are going to adopt is based on a broad consensus. I would like to thank all who transcended purely national interests and negotiated to obtain a solid outcome that enjoys strong support. This document provides us with a guide for our actions until 2015. I invite participants to engage in calm and constructive debate over the coming two days. I hope that at the end of this summit we will have sent the international community a strong message about our will to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. We must do it, we want to do it and we can do it. We do not have the right to fail. The eyes of the world are upon us; let us not disappoint it.

I now yield the floor to His Excellency Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session and Co-Chair of the High-level Plenary Meeting.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Treki) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to welcome you all and thank you for coming. That so many leaders at the highest level are here today sends a strong, unified and unequivocal message to the world that poverty, hunger and inequality are not acceptable and that we are determined to right this wrong.

In 2000, we committed ourselves to a set of priorities with clear targets and a deadline of 2015 to achieve all the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). With just five years left, much progress has been made. Many more children are in school today than in the past. Health care is reaching some of the poorest and mot vulnerable, while there has been marked improvement in the treatment and prevention of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases. However, the evidence is also clear that much more needs to be done. Some goals, in particular with regard to gender equality and maternal mortality, will not be met without intensified interventions. Just fewer than 1 billion people still suffer from hunger and malnutrition. Environmental sustainability remains a huge challenge, and a global partnership still needs to be fully realized.

I take particular pride in saying that, in the run-up to this summit in recent months, we have forged a strong international consensus on the full and timely achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. That consensus was negotiated over many months and many hours. The intensity of the discussions indicates how much importance all countries attach to the MDGs. We may disagree and have differences of opinion on how best to achieve the Goals, but we agree as to the importance of not allowing the poor to be left behind.

Dialogue and consultation and working with all partners in a spirit of openness, transparency and inclusiveness while respecting small and large countries alike, constitute the pillars of the General Assembly. Upholding those principles was central to my presidency, during which we reached this agreement and consensus on system-wide coherence, including the creation of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and the revitalization of the General Assembly. Those achievements show that the United Nations remains strong and central to promoting higher standards of living, full employment and conditions of economic and social progress and development, as first defined in the Charter of the United Nations.

However, let us be frank and acknowledge that whatever we say or agree in the coming days will be but mere words unless poor people in the poorest

countries and communities begin to see improvements in their lives. That will depend upon more than just goodwill and commitments; it will require good policies, tireless implementation and, of course, financial resources to improve the lives of hundreds of millions of people through better health care and access to education, improved access to clean water and sanitation, the empowerment of women and girls and programmes to conserve and protect the environment. Hundreds of billions of dollars are needed.

But since the start of official development assistance and the rise in private donations, billions of dollars have gone towards development and developing countries. Even with the impact of the financial and economic crisis, the aid industry totals some $120 billion a year. So why are the challenges still so staggering?

Clearly, the problem of the misuse of resources remains, and we should not ignore it. Nor can we forget that the quantity of illicit financial flows out of developing countries is many times greater than the levels of official development assistance flowing in. Equally, the quality and effectiveness of aid and how aid is disbursed are far from optimal. It has been proven that without governance and good policymaking, one cannot achieve results that are of benefit to public well-being. But improvements in governance and policymaking also depend on national ownership and responsibility supported rather than undermined by international efforts.

While the MDGs are an ambitious framework, they nevertheless form only part of the conditions needed for change. Development assistance can only accomplish so much. Foreign and domestic financial investment, equitable and pro-poor growth and intensive job creation are the underpinnings for the transformation of developing countries into self-sufficient economies fully integrated into and benefiting from the global economic system. That is why a strong and equitable global partnership is crucial to success.

Once more, I want to welcome participants and thank them for attending. I wish all of us every success. Let us remember that in 2015, even with all the goals met, there will still be poverty, there will still be hunger and there will still be hundreds of millions of people living in unlivable conditions. But let us take the energy, goodwill and resolve that we find here in this Hall today and ensure that the fight against poverty does not falter, but continues through to the end: that of reaching our goal of a better world.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations.

The Secretary-General (*spoke in French*): I welcome the world's leaders to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) summit and thank them for being here in such impressive numbers. We are here because the fight for a more prosperous, stable and equitable world is at the very heart of the United Nations. We are here because 10 years ago, meeting here at the highest level, the international community promised to spare no effort to free the entire human race from want.

(*spoke in English*)

The eight Millennium Development Goals were a breakthrough. Together, we created a blueprint for ending extreme poverty. We defined achievable targets and timetables. We established a framework that all partners, even those with different views, have been able to embrace. We brought new urgency to an age-old mission. And now, we have real results: new thinking and path-breaking public-private partnerships, dramatic increases in school enrolment, expanded access to clean water, better control of disease, and the spread of technology from mobile to green. We have more development success stories than ever before. The transformative impact of the MDGs is undeniable; this is an achievement we can be proud of.

But we must protect these advances, many of which are still fragile. And the clock is ticking, with much more to do. There is more to do for the mother who watches her children go to bed hungry — a scandal played out a billion times each and every night. There is more to do for the young girl weighed down with wood or water when instead she should be in school. And there is more to do for the worker far from home in a city slum, watching jobs and remittances disappear amid global recession.

We all know where we stand — the gaps and the gains, what works and what does not work. The reports we have placed before the Assembly are filled with statistics, analysis and recommendations — everything we need for effective policies and programmes.

We have led participants to the river. So what are we asking of them today? We are asking them to stay true — true to our identity as an international community built on a foundation of solidarity, and true to our commitment to ending the dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty, which means making the smart investments in infrastructure, small farmers, social services and, above all, women and girls. Indeed, on Wednesday, I will launch a global strategy for women's and children's health, which is our best chance for a multiplier effect across the goals.

Being true means supporting the vulnerable despite the economic crisis. We should not balance budgets on the backs of the poor. We must not draw back from official development assistance, which is a lifeline of billions upon billions.

Being true means truly fair trade and action on climate change. Deferring the tough decisions to future climate conferences and future generations only increases the costs. We need to set a course towards sustainable practices.

Being true means addressing inequality, both among and within countries. Even in countries that have registered impressive gains, inequality eats away at social cohesion. Being true also means reconsidering conventional wisdom. Recovery from the economic crisis should not mean a return to the flawed and unjust path that got us into trouble in the first place.

(*spoke in French*)

Despite the obstacles, despite the scepticism, despite the fast-approaching deadline of 2015, the Millennium Development Goals are achievable.

This year I visited nearly a dozen countries in Africa and saw for myself what is possible. At the Millennium Village of Mwandama in Malawi and at the Songhai community in Benin, I saw innovation, integrated projects and a great deal of perseverance. We must reward such faith with resolve of our own by using the tools we have, by delivering the resources we need and, above all, by exercising political leadership. I earnestly urge you to make the Millennium Development Goals your own.

(*spoke in English*)

As our Nigerian citizen ambassador said in the short video that was screened as we were taking our seats, "We are waiting on you, world leaders". And as Mingas of Mozambique sings in the MDG song, "Eight Goals for Africa", "we have the power at this very hour".

None of us can be truly fulfilled while so many lack the basics for a life in dignity. None of us should be able to rest easy knowing the fear and despair that pervade the human family. Let us make this investment in a better future for all. There is no global project more worthwhile. Let us send a strong message of hope, of fundamental hope. Let us keep our promise.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Secretary-General for his statement. In my personal capacity, I thank him also for having used one of my nation's languages, French, in parts of his statement.

Before proceeding further, I would like to remind members that round table 1 on the theme "Addressing the challenge of poverty, hunger and gender equality" will take place at 10 a.m. in Conference Room 4 in the North Lawn Building.

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 64/184 of 21 December 2009, I now give the floor to Mr. Hamidon Ali, President of the Economic and Social Council.

Mr. Ali (President of the Economic and Social Council): It is a particular honour and privilege for me to address this High-level Plenary Meeting in my role as sixty-sixth President of the Economic and Social Council.

I wish to begin by emphasizing the vital role of the Economic and Social Council in advancing development. This role, which is fully enshrined in the Charter, was reaffirmed by heads of State and Government at the 2005 World Summit. That Summit also recognized the need for the Council to take an increased and more effective role in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). As a result, two new functions of the Council were established: one is the high-level Development Cooperation Forum to review trends in international development cooperation, and the other is the annual ministerial review to assess progress and ensure follow-up of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits.

I am pleased to report that the Economic and Social Council has comprehensively implemented its new functions. In particular, the Council has actively

monitored progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals through the annual ministerial review, which was launched in 2007. Through its thematic reviews, the annual ministerial review has focused on all the MDGs. I am particularly pleased that, under the theme of gender equality and empowerment of women, the contribution of the Council to making 2010 a watershed year for women was especially notable.

National voluntary presentations are a crucial component of the annual ministerial review. In this way, the Council has provided countries with opportunities to share what they are doing to meet the challenges in realizing the Millennium Development Goals. I am heartened to note also that the number of countries volunteering for national presentations has remained high, with a total of 34 countries having done so to date. At the Council's high-level segment in July, a record 13 countries demonstrated through their presentations their national-level experiences. Thirteen countries have volunteered to make a presentation in 2011. I believe that the annual ministerial review has proved itself to be a valuable new function of the Council. There is therefore a strong case to be made to further enhance its vital role in the follow-up to this summit through to the year 2015.

One area for future strengthening is in respect of a stronger role for the Council in monitoring commitments and accountability by both developed and developing countries. I hope that this role will become the central pillar for the Council in the years ahead.

This year marked the convening of the second Development Cooperation Forum, held in the midst of a difficult and complex economic and financial climate. The Forum featured ground-breaking discussions and unprecedented participation from multi-stakeholder groups. I believe that the Forum has successfully established itself as one of the primary areas for global dialogue and policy review on the effectiveness and coherence of international development cooperation.

In my view, the Development Cooperation Forum is now also appropriately positioned to play an enhanced role in the follow-up to this summit and in the lead-up to 2015. Later this autumn, when the General Assembly reviews its resolution on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council, it will be my strong recommendation that the General Assembly focus on deepening the role of the Forum. This could be done by having the Forum meet every year instead of every two years, and by establishing an outcome and follow-up that is stronger than the current presidential summary.

In addition to this new function, the Economic and Social Council continues to address other important areas of development, such as the coordination of development work and operational activities of the United Nations system, humanitarian operations and building interaction and institutional links with the Peacebuilding Commission, particularly to address how to achieve the Millennium Development Goals in countries emerging from conflict.

I must also express the Council's and my personal solidarity with the people of Haiti following the devastating earthquake of January 2010. The Council will continue to address the special challenges of Haiti in its transition from recovery to development.

As a parting thought, I note that the Economic and Social Council regards its multi-stakeholder composition as a unique strength. I have witnessed first-hand the value and importance of the contribution of civil society organizations to the work of the Council. I believe that it is imperative that that contribution, together with that of the private sector, academia and other important partners, be deepened. I would humbly urge this body to further strengthen the Council's mandate in those respects in the follow-up to the summit and beyond.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Treki) (*spoke in Arabic*): In accordance with resolution 64/184, I now give the floor to Mr. Robert Zoellick, President of the World Bank.

Mr. Zoellick (World Bank): I want to thank the General Assembly for the opportunity to join participants this morning to take stock of our progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) since 2000, and to redouble our collective efforts to achieve those Goals by 2015.

The Millennium Development Goals are central to the World Bank's mission and our everyday work. We will work with our 187 members across the world, the United Nations, civil society and the private sector to deliver the Millennium promise: a world that overcomes poverty and hunger, strengthens health and

education, creates well-paid jobs and restores a cleaner environment — a world where all citizens have access to opportunity and hope.

We have seen that success is possible. In 1981, 52 per cent of people in developing countries lived in extreme poverty. By 2005, that portion had been cut by more than half. Efforts by developing countries were paying off right up until the crisis, with poverty falling sharply in East Asia, Latin America and Eastern and Central Europe.

However, success has been uneven, and the triple blow of the food, fuel and financial crises since 2008 has slowed down and even reversed progress towards the MDGs in many countries around the world. The World Bank estimates that 64 million more people are living in extreme poverty in 2010, and some 40 million more people went hungry last year because of the food, fuel and financial crises. By 2015, 1.2 million more children under five may die; 350,000 more students may not complete primary school; and about 100 million more people may remain without access to safe water.

These are challenges not just for a summit week. They are challenges every day — every day when a mother goes without food for the sake of her child; every day when a girl is pulled from school for the sake of her brother; every day when a grandmother takes in her grandchild with HIV/AIDS because, quite simply, she is the only one left in the family. And these are challenges faced not just by mothers and fathers, grandparents and children in the poorest countries. Seventy per cent of the world's poor live in middle-income countries.

Over the past 10 years, the World Bank Group has invested $33 billion in health and nutrition in developing countries. We pledge to mobilize substantial new investments in a wide range of sectors to help countries close the gap and achieve the MDGs. We are focusing particularly on an access agenda — helping to ensure access to basic health, quality schooling, clean water, energy, food and jobs, looking not just at the numbers but at the quality of the services.

In health, we are increasing the scope of our results-based programme by more than $600 million until 2015 so that people have the benefits in their hands before the money flows. We are focusing on 35 countries, particularly in East Asia, South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa that face challenges in achieving the MDGs due to high fertility, poor child and maternal nutrition and high rates of child and maternal disease.

To help countries achieve the education MDG, the World Bank has committed to increasing its zero-interest investment in basic education by an additional $750 million. Those investments will focus on countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, that are not on track to reach the education MDG by 2015.

We are expanding our support to infrastructure, where we have more than quadrupled our lending since 2000, and to agriculture, which is so central to boosting incomes, employment and food security in many low-income countries.

We are working with our partners to deliver measurable results across the development agenda. We need to interconnect the various Goals. It is not enough to build health clinics if there are no roads for mothers to gain access to them. It is not enough to train teachers or provide textbooks if children have to struggle with homework at night in the dark. People do not live their lives in health sectors, education sectors or infrastructure sectors, arranged in tidy compartments. People live in families, villages, communities and countries, where all the issues of everyday life merge. We need to connect the dots.

That is what the International Development Association (IDA), the World Bank's fund for the poorest, is doing. Over the past 10 years, IDA has increased its no-interest and grant funding in support of developing countries from $4.4 billion in the year 2000 to $14.5 billion this year. Since the year 2000, IDA funding has helped save 13 million lives. It has helped immunize 311 million children, provided access to water and sanitation for 177 million people, helped more than 47 million people access health services, provided nutrition supplements to 99 million children and educated 13 million girls.

IDA is often the critical cornerstone on which country-led and donor-coordinated support is built. IDA needs new replenishment this year. I ask United Nations Members to help us so that we can help the most vulnerable.

The world has changed greatly since the meeting in 2000 to launch the Millennium Development Goals. Today, it is the emerging economies that are helping pull the world economy out of recession. Today, some

developing countries are emerging as economic powers, and others are moving towards becoming additional poles of growth. Yet some are struggling to attain their potential within this new system, where North and South, East and West, can be points on a compass, not economic destinies.

I believe in Africa. I believe that Africa can become a global pole of growth. Before the crisis, African economies were growing at 5 per cent a year for over a decade, accelerating to over 6 per cent for the last three years. Poverty was declining by about one percentage point a year. That rate was faster than in India. Before the crisis, primary school enrolment rates were rising faster than on any other continent. And in just four years, child mortality rates fell by 25 per cent in about 13 countries.

Of course, there is another side to that story — the nearly 400 million Africans who live on $1.25 a day, and the massive infrastructure deficit that leaves only one in four with access to electricity and even fewer with access to clean water and sanitation.

However, I believe that with the right policies and good governance, with support for infrastructure and skills-training, Africa can attract investment on African terms. We have seen it in the telecommunications sector, where over $56 billion has been invested by the private sector in mobile networks on the African continent, boosting the number of mobile subscribers in the region from 4 million to over 400 million. We have seen it in the tourism sector, where international tourism receipts in sub-Saharan Africa have tripled. We have seen it in new private investors from other developing countries investing in Africa's manufacturing and infrastructure. And that can be just the beginning.

As we review the last decade of progress on the MDGs at the United Nations this week, we must also look beyond and behind the numbers to see what we can learn from them. We need to invest in what works, and fix or end what does not. We need to work with developing countries as clients, not as development models from textbooks. We need to help them solve problems, not test theories. And as we do, we must remember that this work is ultimately about empowering people, families and communities. Last week, I walked around a poor village in a mountainous part of Guizhou province, China. It was a village like many that I have seen in Africa, Central America or India. But these farmers were doing better. The Chinese Government and the Bank had offered some modest support to build water cisterns and access roads, and to terrace lands. And the villagers had done the rest — harvesting more crops, adding some pigs and livestock. They did not want a blueprint. They did not want handouts. All they wanted was a chance.

So when I look across this Assembly Hall, I imagine some of the faces of those shrewd and practical villagers sitting among the participants. They know what they can do; they want to know what the General Assembly will do. Give them that chance.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) (*spoke in French*): In accordance with General Assembly resolution 64/184, I now give the floor to Mr. Dominique Strauss-Kahn, Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund.

Mr. Strauss-Kahn (International Monetary Fund): Like everyone today, I speak today with a sense of urgency. Before the crisis, we saw strong growth and macroeconomic stability in the developing countries, driven mainly by good, home-grown policies, but also supported by an enabling international environment. This was translating into improving social indicators and falling poverty rates, and gave us grounds for optimism. But because of the crises — not only the financial crisis, but also the fuel and food prices crises — we lost years of progress, and the momentum has been derailed.

As a result, about 70 million fewer people will escape from the chains of poverty by 2020. Many millions more will suffer the consequences of unemployment or underemployment. We must redouble our efforts in the face of this immense human suffering; we must strive for a speedy return to the pre-crisis path. To that end, everything hinges on the restoration of balanced, sustainable global growth. I do insist on this, and that may be my main message this morning. Without growth — sustainable, global growth — all other efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) will be frustrated. We will be treading water against a rapidly advancing tide.

To regain momentum, we need a sense of shared responsibility among the various actors — the developing countries themselves, the advanced economies and, in part, the international financial institutions. For the advanced economies and the leading emerging market economies, the focus must be first and foremost on securing sustainable global

recovery and getting the growth engine up and running again. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) analysis, which we have prepared for the Group of 20 (G20) and which will be released at the meeting in Seoul in about two months, shows that cooperative action could produce huge results. Over the next five years, we could have 2.5 per cent extra growth, which means the creation of 30 million jobs and lifting 33 million people out of poverty. This talk of cooperative action is not just a mantra; it is real, it is essential. It affects people's lives.

Of course, advanced economies should also help developing countries in other ways, including by keeping their Gleneagles promises on aid, and also by opening trade, which is one of the most important ways to help low-income countries. Why? Because exports have the ability to unleash a wave of productivity and growth in developing countries.

Developing countries must also help themselves, which means building on past success. The buffers built in good times have been very useful during the crisis, creating room — especially fiscal room and sometimes monetary room — to support their economies and help the most vulnerable. So developing countries must be able to rebuild their policy buffers, including by mobilizing domestic tax revenue. This will create room for investment in infrastructure and strengthening social safety nets.

But, of course, the international financial institutions must also do their part. During the crisis, the IMF rapidly increased its support to low-income countries. We have quadrupled — multiplied by four — our lending. We have created something that never existed in the past — zero-interest loans to developing countries. And we have streamlined conditionality — that well-known IMF conditionality which is supposed to be so harmful to countries. We changed it and focused on what was absolutely necessary for countries to cope with the crisis, and the conditions linked to the various loans we made dropped dramatically by a factor of four or five. So we did our part, even if a lot still has to be done.

Let me come, in a few words, to a kind of conclusion. The United Nations and the IMF share a common birth and a common goal. Both were founded in the wake of the Second World War after an economic conflict turned into a real conflict, leaving tens of millions dead and the world in ruins. The leaders of the post-war world promised then never to repeat the mistakes of the past.

The mandate of the IMF — the one we all know — may begin with economic stability, but it ends with a much greater goal: a prosperous and ever more peaceful world. We at the IMF, and those here at the United Nations, will not fulfil our mandates while so many of our fellow global citizens remain marginalized, without access to the basic necessities, and hindered from making a decent and secure living with a decent job. So today we have the opportunity to start again. Let us together fulfil the post-war promise. Let us support the common welfare of humanity, and let us look forward to a world free of poverty and free of conflict.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Treki): In accordance with General Assembly resolution 64/184, I now give the floor to the Director-General of the World Trade Organization.

Mr. Lamy (World Trade Organization) (*spoke in French*): A well-known proverb says that to want is to do. Ten years ago, that desire united world leaders in their commitment to eradicating poverty forever. Now that we are perhaps emerging from an economic crisis that is unprecedented in both its size and global effect, it is time to question how international trade and the World Trade Organization (WTO) have contributed to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and more specifically to MDG 8, which is to establish a global partnership for development.

As MDG 8 indicates, an open, rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory trading system can be a powerful motor of economic growth and development. The primary mission of the World Trade Organization is to regulate international trade, reduce trade barriers and ensure equal conditions for all members, whether large or small, rich or poor. This fits perfectly with the aim of MDG 8, which is to ensure a favourable pro-development environment for international trade.

The advantages of free trade are well known and can be seen in the growth of countries that have opened their borders to trade. They are even more evident if, at the same time, those countries have established appropriate domestic policies on investment, training and social protection. I will cite just two such results.

First, it is a fact that the regions with the most marked poverty eradication are those with the highest rate of trade. There is a correlation between integration in the multilateral economic system and economic growth and, as we are aware, between economic growth and poverty reduction. Secondly, and more topical, is the fact that the multilateral trade system has served to counter the worst instances of protectionism during the crisis. The monitoring system we established has so far prevented general recourse to restrictive trade measures that would have penalized the poorest countries first. It is because international trade has remained open that it has become a driving force in the recovery.

According to our recent estimates — and I have reserved this information so that the Assembly could be the first to hear this morning — the volume of trade this year should show a 13.5 per cent increase, which is much higher than our previous assessments. Of this increase, the developed countries accounted for 11 per cent and the developing countries for 17 per cent. These most recent figures show that WTO discipline has given the poorest countries the means to emerge more quickly from the recession.

However, despite the positive contribution of the multilateral trading system to eliminating poverty, we can and must do more, first, in the field of regulation by working to conclude the Doha Development Round as soon as possible. The conclusion of the Doha Round would create new opportunities for growth and strengthen a world partnership to make greater use of free trade in the development process.

As we prepare for the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, we must keep our promises by, for example, providing to the least developed countries duty-free and quota-free access to the markets, or in the meantime by regulating subsidies in the cotton market. We must not only improve regulation, but also provide the neediest developing countries with the resources necessary to develop their capacities to participate in international trade. In other words, we must continue on the path of aid for trade and help the poorest countries to develop their production capacity and to take part in international trade, which will make it possible for them to strengthen growth more quickly in the future.

Since 2005, aid for trade has seen constant growth, without affecting international commitments in other areas, including health care, education and water. However, we now face a crisis that must not deter us from our goal in July 2011 when the WTO will organize the Third Global Review of Aid for Trade, where we will more accurately assess the impact of aid for trade on development in order to deepen our understanding of its importance and relevance.

The Millennium Development Goals can lead to true development if they are reached concurrently. The WTO can and must contribute by successfully concluding the Doha Round and ensuring that aid for trade continues at its current level.

To conclude, a good student can always do better. That is the assessment we suggest the Assembly offer the WTO when it evaluates its contribution to achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) (*spoke in French*): In accordance with General Assembly resolution 64/184, I now give the floor to the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

Mr. Panitchpakdi (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development): A decade ago, through the Millennium Declaration, the international community made a collective promise to make globalization "a positive force for all the world's people" (*resolution 55/2 para. 5*). The Declaration acknowledged that a world free from want, misery and insecurity would require strong, sustainable and inclusive development and collective action at the international level.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) agenda has helped galvanize that action and progress has undoubtedly been made, although results have been mixed. However, we know all too well that the recent financial and economic crisis has been a major setback and put the MDGs at the risk of being beyond the reach of some regions by 2015. Yet even before the crisis, many countries were struggling to keep on track despite a period of strong growth in the global economy. The reasons for this are undeniably complex, but lack of productive investment and the persistence of employment in low-productivity activities have kept incomes low and restricted economic diversification in many developing countries.

At the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), we have consistently pointed to the failure of finance-driven globalization and economic growth to establish the policy framework

needed to address these structural causes of widespread poverty and deprivation. In view of the collective commitment to achieving the MDGs, several policy changes and actions are urgently needed. Let me briefly mention the most salient.

First, in many countries efforts to meet the MDGs will be difficult without a significant rise in public investment. That points to a larger role for fiscal policy in the development process. It will also entail better tax administration to ensure rising revenues, but at the same time the role of the private sector must be harnessed as well.

Second, targeted sectoral policies are also needed to alleviate poverty. For example, improving agricultural production should be given greater policy attention in countries where food insecurity is still a perennial problem. The key determinants of labour productivity in agriculture include research and development, education of the rural population — especially women and girls — rural infrastructure, particularly electricity and roads, and technology. Support and investment in those areas, including by attracting foreign investment, would have a major impact on poverty reduction.

Third, in addition to targeted government spending and an increased strategic role for the State, the mobilization of private domestic resources will also be essential for raising long-term productive investment. Indeed, this is key to triggering more virtuous development circles, as mobilization of domestic resources also helps increase the policy and fiscal space needed to keep productivity on a rising trend. Countries should be allowed to determine their own destiny as well as their policies and spending, in line with local needs and conditions. Historically, that has been the experience of all industrialized nations, and it is still relevant today.

Fourth, the crisis and its negative impact, particularly in the fight to reduce global poverty, are forcing us to re-examine global economic governance, including the international architecture for aid, trade and debt. Official development assistance needs to increase if the decline in flows to productive sectors such as the agriculture, industry and energy is to be reversed without jeopardizing social goals. However, it is just as important that rich countries resist making adjustments in response to the crisis that could trigger unfavourable movements in the trade and debt positions of developing countries. That is a key challenge to the international community and its collective endeavour to attain the MDGs.

Lastly, the MDGs must pay greater attention to inequality, which had been increasing globally even as the world gets richer. UNCTAD's research has demonstrated the strong links between poverty and income inequality. Simple, progressive fiscal policies could have an immediate and impressive impact on poverty reduction.

This list is not exhaustive, but it goes some way towards repositioning the MDGs within a broader development framework. Such a framework emphasizes investment — especially in productive capacity — equitable distribution of resources, policy space and the generation of sustainable employment as the main drivers of poverty reduction. Key to supporting that framework at the international level is a renewal of trust across the multilateral system. That will take both time and vision.

In thinking about this challenge, and by way of concluding my remarks, let me draw from Thailand's experience in rural development, which helped bring millions of people out of poverty and provided a framework for balanced and sustainable agricultural development. It has been estimated by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) that raising the average agricultural productivity of the Asia-Pacific region to that of Thailand could take over 200 million people out of poverty and reduce inequality. The lessons of the Thai model for rural development are worth considering in other developing countries.

Indeed, Thailand's experiments with a sufficiency economy are well documented in academic studies and United Nations reports. The aim of this approach is to find ways of engaging with a globalizing world in a balanced manner, safely and inclusively. It emphasizes development from within, self-protection, conservation, caution and moderation. It calls for the sustainable use of resources and concern for the social and environmental impact of economic decisions.

One reason we risk many MDG targets is that the economic model that underpins them has, I believe, been indifferent to the kind of values behind a sufficient economy. It has been characterized by short-term returns, tolerance for excessive risk and indifference to environmental and social costs. These

values cannot be the basis of a shared future. To match the vision demonstrated back in 2000 and to meet the MDGs — whether by 2015 or after — we must again find the courage and ambition to change the path of our economic development.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Treki) (*spoke in Arabic*): In accordance with resolution 64/184, I now give the floor to Ms. Helen Clark, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, as Chair of the United Nations Development Group.

Ms. Clark (United Nations Development Group): The outcome of this summit can be a real turning point for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The challenge will be to follow words with action to bring about positive change for the billions of people who need the MDG promise of a decade ago honoured.

The series of global crises and natural disasters and ongoing conflicts of recent years do not make the task any easier, but they do not make it impossible. The MDGs can be achieved. They are all interlinked; progress on one can spur progress on another. If we all pull together, each in our area of strength and expertise, and invest our resources where they will have the greatest impact across the Goals, we will see remarkable progress.

It will be vital to support country-led development processes and the strengthening of local and national institutions and their capacity, as it will be vital to foster accountability, the rule of law and human rights, the lack of which is a barrier to full achievement of the MDGs.

Progress on the poverty and hunger targets will require boosting agricultural and rural-sector development, especially in low-income and food-scarce countries. It will require more inclusive models of economic growth that expand opportunities for the poor and, following the Global Jobs Pact, provide decent and productive work for men and women, including the world's young people. Progress will require increasing access to affordable energy and putting it on more sustainable footing, scaling up social protection to build resilience to adversity and building effective domestic resource mobilization and budget systems and the capacity to deliver on the ground to people.

Progress most definitely will require investing more in opportunities and in the rights of women and girls. It will require targeting investments in education, health, clean water and sanitation and attending to the needs of the urban poor, including for adequate shelter. If our efforts are based on equity principles and if we focus on the most impoverished, we will also see very quick and cost-effective improvements in maternal and child health in particular, potentially many averting many millions of deaths.

All the agencies, funds and programmes in the United Nations Development Group stand ready now to step up their efforts following this summit to support nations meeting the MDGs. In just recent weeks and months, a number of our United Nations country teams working with Government partners have piloted an MDG acceleration framework, which is about identifying the bottlenecks to and the constraints on MDG progress and then identifying the solutions that will help countries meet the goals they set.

In our work, we see how bringing basic generators to communities in Burkina Faso transforms the lives of women. We see how small investments in providing clean water have huge benefits for villages in rural Vanuatu. We see how, in Ethiopia, we can help farmers to sell their produce at fair prices by supporting the development of that important commodities exchange. These are but three of countless examples, so we need to ask ourselves: If programmes like these work, what could we do to bring them to scale elsewhere?

Failure to meet the MDGs cannot be blamed on the world's lacking the resources and the know-how to do so. There is a very wide range of proven policies and interventions that, where adapted to national contexts, will ensure progress. So, every day leaders can determine to make the changes needed to put their countries on a fast track to the MDGs. Every day, the international donors can make decisions, despite tough economic circumstances, about delivering more aid for more catalytic purposes, in line with the commitments they have made in the past. Every day, efforts can go into reaching a global trade deal that works for poor countries and a climate deal that supports both development and preserving the ecosystems of the one planet we have to dwell on.

No one actor alone can meet the MDGs. Achieving them draws all of us together: Governments,

multilateral agencies, civil society, non-governmental organizations, foundations and the private sector. Going forward, let us prioritize what each of us does around what, on the evidence, is most likely to work. A decade into the twenty-first century, we can turn that MDG promise of a decade ago into reality. Let us make that happen; let us just do it.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) (*spoke in French*): We have heard the last speaker for the opening segment of the High-level Plenary Meeting.

We will now continue the High-level Plenary Meeting of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly. Before we begin the list of speakers, I would like to turn to some organizational matters pertaining to the conduct of the meetings of the High-level Plenary Meeting.

We turn first to the length of statements. I would like to remind members that, in accordance with resolution 64/184 of 21 December 2009, the list of speakers was created on the basis that statements will have a time limit of up to 5 minutes per statement. In the light of that given time frame, I would like to appeal to speakers to deliver their statements at a normal speed so that interpretation may be provided properly. To assist speakers in managing their time, a light system has been installed at the speaker's rostrum.

I appeal to all speakers for their cooperation in observing the time limits of their statements so that all those inscribed on the list of speakers for a given meeting will be heard at that meeting. We all know the saying according to which punctuality is the politeness of kings. I have no doubt that every head of State, prime minister, minister and representative of a Member State will honour us with their compliance.

I should like to inform members of the programme for the closure of the High-level Plenary Meeting. We shall first hear the statements of Member States, after which the Assembly will take action on draft resolution A/65/L.1, entitled "Keeping the promise: united to achieve the Millennium Development Goals". The Secretary-General will be present for the adoption of the draft resolution. The Assembly will then continue to hear the speakers inscribed on the list, followed by the closing statements of the Co-Chairs and the closure of the High-level Plenary Meeting.

In order to avoid disruption for the speakers, I would like to seek the cooperation of representatives to remain in their seats after a statement has been delivered. In this connection, I invite speakers, after delivering their statements, to exit the General Assembly Hall through room GA-200, located behind the podium, before returning to their seats.

The Assembly will how hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Porfirio Lobo Sosa, President of the Republic of Honduras.

President Lobo Sosa (*spoke in Spanish*): Ten years ago, our heads of State and Government recognized in the Millennium Declaration their joint responsibility to respect and defend the principles of human dignity. A decade later, we must ratify our commitment to the fundamental values linked to the freedom of all human beings on the planet: equal rights and opportunities; solidarity with those who suffer the most; tolerance of our diverse beliefs, cultures and languages; respect for nature; and the shared responsibility of all Governments to achieve economic and social development.

In 2010, our greatest challenge remains that of extending the benefits of world economic growth to 1 billion people living in extreme poverty. The solidarity of high-income countries, good management on the part of the Governments of beneficiary countries, and the efforts of their citizens are indispensable to breaking the bonds of disease, hunger and ignorance.

The Millennium Development Goals were a first step in the right direction In the light of the results achieved, I call for the launch of a discussion on a new international agreement to guide our actions and goals after 2015. We agree with Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon that the current objectives to counter extreme poverty can be achieved. They are difficult and ambitious, but achievable.

Nevertheless, in my opinion our fight against poverty will require additional efforts, including the recognition of our collective responsibility to protect and share what I call "common international goods". Among these, I would stress solidarity through official development assistance, the objectives of which, adopted in 1970, we are very far from meeting.

Another global good should be the prudent management of our economies. The financial crisis has demonstrated that this responsibility does lie solely with developing countries. The same may be said of

protectionism, which tends to appear at difficult times. Opening the trading and financial systems is yet another global good. There is absolutely no doubt that access to international markets is just as important as official development assistance, although it is not a substitute for it. In the years to come, we must act more vigorously and with greater alacrity.

According to independent studies of progress on the eight main targets of the Millennium Development Goals, the number of people living on less than $1.25 a day has slightly decreased. Likewise, there has been some limited progress in decreasing the number of undernourished people. On universal primary education, the pace of progress has improved. A greater effort is needed on the goal of promoting gender equality and empowering women, and that of reducing child mortality requires new action. We must note that we are far from attaining the target of reducing maternal mortality. On HIV and AIDS, an enormous task remains ahead of us. And finally, there has been progress on access to safe drinking water, but additional investment is needed on this essential target.

Although the goals have not yet been attained, a group of countries have made positive progress. According to the Centre for Global Development, this group includes my country, Honduras, at the top of the list, along with countries such as the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Ethiopia, Uganda, Burkina Faso, Nepal, Cambodia and Ghana. Despite the obvious statistical and methodological difficulties with such studies, the results suggest that those countries could attain many of the Millennium Development Goals.

Let us renew our efforts to attain the targets that have been set, in particular as these will lead to a world with less poverty and less inequality.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Nicolas Sarkozy, President of the French Republic.

President Sarkozy (*spoke in French*): Ten years ago, the world decided to halve extreme poverty, to provide education for all children, to reduce child mortality by two thirds, to improve maternal health, to combat AIDS and malaria and to promote gender equality. That was 10 years ago. Much progress has been made, but the road still to be travelled is very long.

We have five years to attain our goals. Beginning two years ago the world has experienced an unprecedented economic crisis. The question now is whether we are going to use that crisis as a pretext for doing less or, instead, make the necessary extra effort to keep our promises.

France has decided to mobilize. We are the second highest provider of official development assistance, with €10 billion per year, and, as the second highest contributor to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, we have decided to increase our contribution by 20 per cent over the next three years. We are not merely not going to reduce our contribution or keep it stable: we are going to increase it by 20 per cent. The crisis for the wealthy countries is very serious: there are deficits. But the crisis has far graver consequences for poor countries. Hence, we have no right to do less than what we have decided to do. It is our hope that all developed countries will decide, as we have, to do more, and of course to make Africa a priority.

Malaria kills a million children a year in Africa. To make that statistic clear, before I have completed this address 30 children in Africa will have died of malaria. We have no right to hide behind the economic crisis in order to do less. The Fund is caring for 2.5 million AIDS patients. If every country followed our example, 4 million could be cared for.

It is not a matter of making statements; it is a matter of taking decisions. Let me also share my conviction that public funds alone will not attain our goals. We must also involve the private sector. As future Chair of the Group of 20 (G-20) and the Group of Eight (G-8), I will attend the African Union Summit to be held in Addis Ababa in late January. And during my year as Chair of the G-20 and the G-8, I will do my utmost to promote the idea of innovative financing, as advocated by Bernard Kouchner. I am convinced that, although the developed countries are facing deficits, they must find new sources of financing for the fight against poverty, for promoting education and for resolving the major health problems facing Africa.

Innovative financing and taxing financial transactions are things on which we can take a decision here. Why should we wait? Finance has been globalized, but to what end? Why should we not ask the financial sector to participate in stabilizing the

world by imposing a tiny tax on every financial transaction.

At the Copenhagen climate summit we all made commitments: $30 billion a year in fast-start funding, and $100 billion for development. But we will be unable to meet those commitments without major progress on innovative financing. As future Chair of the G-20 and the G-8, we do our utmost to move this idea forward. It is vital, and our credibility is at stake.

Let me add once again: we must meet our commitments on financing for development. We must come up with innovative financing. We must all — and Africa in particular — take our place in the new world governance. I will not tire of repeating this from this rostrum: We are living in the twenty-first century. We cannot continue with the governance of the twentieth century.

The coming year will be a year for every possible type of change. We are the Heads of State and Government of the world. After the crisis, let us not fall back into our old, bad habits and the daily grind of the past. The coming year must one of great change. We have all recognized this. France hopes to participate, not, of course, by making speeches or offering lessons, but by drawing the entire world towards a new kind of world governance, towards greater solidarity and towards the emergence of innovative financing. If we do that, all peoples will heed and respect us.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Islam Karimov, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

President Karimov (*spoke in Russian*): As underscored in the Millennium Declaration, one of the most serious obstacles to the fight against extreme poverty, hunger, the increase in maternal and child mortality, epidemics and other problems is the ongoing wars and conflicts on our planet and continued inter-State, inter-ethnic and inter-religious confrontations.

One clear example of this is the case of long-suffering Afghanistan, where military operations have continued unabated for over 30 years. Today, it has become obvious that there is no military solution to the Afghan problem, and the chosen strategy of the coalition forces to bring peace to Afghanistan is not yielding the expected results. Every day the war drags on, the situation of the people of Afghanistan deteriorates further and it becomes even harder to find a solution to the problem itself.

Given the situation, it is extremely important to find an alternative path to achieving peace and stability in Afghanistan. We believe that an important part could be played by establishing, under the auspices of the United Nations, a "6+3" contact group, as proposed by Uzbekistan in 2008. The concept and essence of our proposal is that the Afghan people themselves must solve their own problems, with assistance from those countries that, because of their own security interests, want to put an end to the war and create a stable future of Afghanistan. These countries would include, of course, first and foremost the United States of America, the NATO countries and Russia, which are concretely engaged in the peacemaking mission, as well as Afghanistan's closest neighbours.

The most important goal of the 6+3 contact group would be to offer the parties a programme for ending military operations in Afghanistan, finding compromise solutions on the key problems and contradictions that split the country, and providing security and the necessary guarantees, taking into account the interests of all parties.

To that end, attention must be paid in the programme to providing economic assistance, implementing social, infrastructural and humanitarian projects, tackling unemployment and combating poverty and lawlessness. There must be full respect for the centuries-old traditions of the people of Afghanistan and the customs and values of the religion of Islam. The coalition peacekeeping forces that are still based in Afghanistan can facilitate the achievement of that goal.

The tragic events that took place in June 2010 in Kyrgyzstan pose a serious threat to the stability of situation in the Central Asian region. The overthrow in April of the discredited presidential power, the ensuing tension and confrontation, and the vacuum of legitimate power in the country served as a prologue to the cruel and bloody inter-ethnic tragedy in southern Kyrgyzstan. These events brought about the deaths of hundreds of people and suffering for thousands of completely innocent citizens.

Today, we have grounds to state that the Kyrgyz people themselves and the sizeable Uzbek diaspora

living in the South of the country are being held hostage to a carefully planned and well-organized action by a third party's forces. Their intention was to create chaos and an unmanageable situation in the country while pursuing the far-reaching goal of dragging Uzbekistan into this bloody rivalry and turning an inter-ethnic standoff into an inter-State confrontation between the two neighbouring States, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.

In this extremely complex and explosive situation, the most difficult problem we face is ensuring that the situation does not follow the planned scenario. At a substantial cost to us in terms of resources, we have welcomed into our territory more than 100,000 refugees, including women, children and the elderly, and we have sheltered, accommodated and fed them. At the same time, we had to ensure that the brutal violence would not spread and to preserve peace and calm in the border areas, preventing any outbreak of emotions, passions and extremism that could lead to unpredictable results.

It was only our sound thinking and our understanding of the very basic truth that, for centuries, Uzbeks and Kyrgyz have lived side by side on this land and that their children and descendants will continue to live together for many more centuries that enabled us and our people to garner our strength and prevent the tragedy from becoming a major new hotbed of tension in Central Asia.

Of course, Kyrgyzstan does require humanitarian assistance and support from its neighbours and the world community. However, it is no less important that there be an independent international inquiry into the pogroms, murders and violence committed from 11 to 14 June in southern Kyrgyzstan in order to bring to trial all those who ordered, organized and carried out those bloody outrages. We believe that such a timely, objective and independent international investigation, avoiding a unilateral or biased approach, and a firm and principled stand by the international community would pave the way to peace and reconciliation between the Kyrgyz and the Uzbek minority in southern Kyrgyzstan. Any deviation from these positions could lead to a recurrence of those tragic events and the emergence of a very dangerous source of tension in southern Kyrgyzstan.

In this connection, we believe that we are entitled to expect the United Nations to provide comprehensive assistance in conducting an independent international investigation into these tragic events so as to prevent any possible escalation of events in neighbouring Kyrgyzstan.

Given the current anomalous climate changes, another very important factor in achieving the Goals of the Millennium Declaration is to protect the environment. A glaring example of that is what has happened to the Aral Sea because of irresponsible approaches in the past. It was once a unique and very beautiful sea, but it has now become a dried up and vanishing body of water. Over 40 years, the area of the Aral Sea has been reduced seven-fold and its volume of water by 13-fold. Its mineralization has increased 10-fold, making the Sea unable to support any living organisms. Fully degraded, all flora and fauna have virtually disappeared.

There are also environmental, socio-economic and demographic problems in the region surrounding the Aral Sea. That was noted by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on his visit to the Sea this year, for which we are very grateful. The ongoing disappearance of the Aral Sea and the humanitarian disaster accompanying it mean that we must try to preserve the biological ecosystem in the Aral region and reduce the devastating impact of the crisis on the surrounding environment and the repercussions for the hundreds of thousands, and even millions, of people who live there.

Water reaches the Aral Sea from the Amu Darya and Syr Darya rivers. Reducing the flow of water of those rivers would be completely devastating for the already fragile environmental situation in the region. Therefore, any attempt to implement projects drafted 30 to 40 years ago in the Soviet period to build large-scale hydropower facilities upstream, including enormous dams — plans that do not take into account the seismicity of the area, which the proposed construction could raise by eight to nine points — could inflict irreparable damage on the environment and create a very dangerous man-made catastrophe.

As many international environmental organizations and respected experts have recommended, it would be much more rational to switch to building less dangerous but more economical and smaller hydro-power stations on those rivers, with the same power-generating capacities. The problems of the vanishing Aral Sea are problems for the millions of

people living in the region, who have hopefully turned to the United Nations for assistance.

I take this opportunity to very briefly inform the Assembly about the concrete steps taken by Uzbekistan to achieve the Goals set out in the Millennium Declaration.

Nineteen years have passed since the Republic of Uzbekistan became an independent State and joined the ranks of full-fledged Members of the United Nations. In the years that Uzbekistan has been independent, our country has transitioned from a one-sided, hypertrophied, raw-materials-based economy comprised of a destructive monopoly over cotton production, primitive productive and social infrastructure and low per-capita consumption to making achievements that have entirely changed its image and made it part of the world community.

In those years, our gross domestic product and per capita income grew by factors of 3.5 and 2.5, respectively, with average pay increasing 14-fold. State expenditure in the social sector also grew five-fold, with over 50 per cent of the annual State budget channelled to that sector.

Currently, 82.5 per cent of our people have access to clean drinking water, and 83.5 to natural gas. We have also taken resolute steps to radically reform and develop the health care system and to eradicate or considerably reduce the most serious infectious diseases. The level of maternal mortality has dropped two-fold, and child mortality three-fold. In the course of the past 19 years, average life expectancy has increased from 67 to 73 years, with life expectancy for women rising to 75 years. Today, 48 per cent of the people with jobs in our country are women.

Despite the serious impact of the global financial and economic crisis, Uzbekistan is one of the few States in the world to maintain stable high economic growth rates, as well as a reliable financial and banking system. Our economy grew by 9 per cent and 8 per cent, respectively, in 2008 and 2009. We expect that growth to be at 8.5 per cent this year. Our foreign State debt is less than 10 per cent of gross domestic product.

The basis for those achievements has been our own model for the country's democratization and transition to a socially oriented free-market economy, which we adopted in the early years of our independence. That model is based on such principles as stripping the economy of an ideological bias, with its priority on politics, and giving the State the role of principal reformer responsible for ensuring the rule of law, conducting a strong social policy and providing consistency and an incremental approach to implementing reforms.

From the outset, we have rejected the imposition of shock-therapy methods and deceptive ideas about the market economy being self-regulating. We chose a gradual approach to shifting from a totalitarian command economy to a market system of management. In doing so, we have acted on the principle of not demolishing an old house until a new one is built.

I would also like especially to underscore the enormous role and significance of education in our approach, including expanding people's awareness of all those transformations. Annual education expenditures in Uzbekistan make up 10 to 12 per cent of gross domestic product, while that figure averages 3 to 5 per cent in the rest of the world. We have also put in place a national training programme and, in 2009, introduced mandatory 12-year education.

Uzbekistan sees becoming a developed country of the world as its most important goal. We want to continue to expand our political and economic reforms, modernize our country and develop civil society so as to ensure decent living standards for all our citizens.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that Uzbekistan supports Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's proposal for a global action plan to speed up progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. We intend to participate very actively in its implementation.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Treki) (*spoke in Arabic*): The General Assembly will now hear an address by His Majesty King Mswati III of the Kingdom of Swaziland.

King Mswati: It gives me immense pleasure to address this High-level Plenary Meeting of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly. We are gathered here once again to review progress made in our respective countries with regard to efforts to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The major thrust of the MDGs is the elimination of extreme poverty by ensuring better living standards for all our peoples. In the year 2000, we came together to explore ways to improve the lives of our peoples. It was then that we resolved to embark on the MDGs.

It is encouraging to note that, as we pursue the targets we have set regarding delivery of the MDGs, we are able to meet from time to time to review progress. In the process, we are able to discuss challenges and bottlenecks whilst also sharing ideas on possible strategies to address areas that hinder progress.

While the Kingdom has made considerable progress towards achieving the MDGs, we still face many challenges in our efforts to eradicate poverty and create better living conditions for our people. For example, as developing countries, we are faced with such challenges as job creation, unemployment and attracting and retaining foreign direct investment whilst promoting local investment and strengthening agro-business. We also need to improve our manufacturing, tourism and small and medium-sized enterprise sectors, just to mention a few.

One of the crucial ways to make progress towards the eradication of extreme poverty is to stimulate agricultural development. In order to increase food production, the Government is providing agricultural inputs, such as tractors, seeds and fertilizers, to our farmers. We are already seeing some improvement as a result of this programme, with our farmers being able to till the land in a timely manner, thanks to their access to farming inputs. However, we need more resources in order to build dams and bore holes for both irrigation and household use countrywide. Our aim is to ensure greater productivity with particular regard to growing our staple food on Swazi nation land. The nation is also working towards the diversification of agricultural exports and access to new markets.

In order to address all the aforementioned challenges, education remains at the top of the agenda in our national effort to achieve the MDGs. We believe that children should be protected and should have unlimited access to education irrespective of their socio-economic status or gender. Our education curriculum aims at providing innovative life skills that will empower our children with business skills so that they can start their own businesses.

We realize that our day to day lives are increasingly controlled by technology. As a developing country, we are determined to equip our children with an adequate education in information and communications technology (ICT), because today's industries require human capital that is ICT-aware. Our objective is to ensure that our children are not left out of the world of ICT and that they are on a par with their peers from the developed world.

On that note, I am pleased to inform the Assembly that the Kingdom has started the roll-out of free primary education, in order to ensure that every child will have access to basic education by 2015. This year, our enrolment increased by over 15.3 per cent. Furthermore, primary school children are currently benefiting from food programmes whereby all are provided with a nutritious meal. Using our traditional structures, we have created neighbourhood care points to enable orphaned and vulnerable children throughout the country to be fed.

As in many other developing countries, the effects of poverty and disease in Swaziland have resulted in an increase in the number of orphaned and vulnerable children in the country. Once we because aware of the problem, we established a fund to channel resources to respond to the situation. Indeed, over the years, the Government has continued to increase the budget allocation for bursaries for orphaned and vulnerable children, in order to ensure their attendance in school. Since independence, the Government has continued to fund tertiary education for all students, which we do despite the fact that the country faces unprecedented fiscal pressures following the global economic and financial crisis.

The health of a nation is very important, as it affects productivity. We are therefore doing everything possible to make sure that our citizens have access to good health and medical facilities so that we can have a healthy and happy nation. We have thus declared health as a priority area and are continuously building hospitals and clinics and providing specialized doctors. In addition, we are making efforts to attract local professionals who are working outside our borders. Our aim is to avoid the huge cost of sending patients with complicated medical conditions abroad on referral and to simultaneously improve our health services.

However, such challenges as tuberculosis, HIV and AIDS together with the related social impediments are some of the major drawbacks that militate against progress in achieving the MDGs relating to maternal care. Our response has been to continue to advocate in favour of good health practices, which we hope will decrease the spread of HIV/AIDS and other diseases.

We encourage people to adopt preventive practices since prevention is better than cure.

Our comprehensive integrated HIV prevention package is to be scaled up and delivered in an accelerated mode in the coming year. There has also been a significant increase in access to antiretroviral therapy since 2005. The national tuberculosis response programme has made significant progress over the past five years.

I am happy to note that we have achieved the MDG on malaria, and we continue to strengthen our efforts, as we are now in the elimination phase. The country's best practices in this regard have contributed significantly to the efforts undertaken by the Southern African Development Community.

A daunting challenge we in the developing world face is the inadequacy of resources to support the delivery of key services, especially those that form part of the MDGs. It is important to address the issue of the availability of resources if we are to meet the 2015 target we set for ourselves. As a result of the global economic and financial crisis, our nation experienced an unprecedented fall in trade-related revenue. Whilst these challenges make achieving the MDGs very difficult, they by no means preclude the attainment of those noble goals. Be that as it may, measures are in place to mitigate the consequences. These measures include the setting up of the new Revenue Authority, the adoption of value added tax legislation and the broadening of the tax base.

Our commitment to achieving the MDGs is further strengthened by the fact that our national development strategy, adopted in 1998, sets the road map for Swaziland to become a developed nation. This resolve has been reaffirmed by the Swazi nation in our recent national dialogue, where the nation agreed that we need to work harder and smarter in order to realize this vision.

In conclusion, I wish to emphasize that to ensure a better world for our children and future generations, developed and developing countries must continue working together. Despite the global challenges in finance, the economy and the climate, we are confident that the developed countries will continue to be committed to honouring their official development assistance pledges. Modelled on what they have done with the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, we encourage the developed nations to emulate the same spirit of providing support to developing countries in our endeavours to attain the MDGs.

I would like to thank all the development partners and investors who have supported my country and, indeed, the African continent in our drive towards sustainable development. This proves that the MDGs are, indeed, an unprecedented global commitment. Working together, we shall succeed in achieving the MDGs and improving the standard of living for all our peoples.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Treki) (*spoke in Arabic*): The General Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Evo Morales Ayma, President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

President Morales Ayma (*spoke in Spanish*): I am pleased to greet the Co-Chairs of this meeting and the Secretary-General of this global Organization.

After carefully listening to the statements made by representatives of international organizations and by a number of Presidents in this major debate on poverty, I have reached the conclusion that, above all, we see poverty from the viewpoint of its effects and not the causes that give rise to it.

I want to say at the outset that, sadly, the unfair distribution of wealth creates poverty, and the world's current economic policies and models provide no solutions to put an end to poverty. Very few of us are entitled to live in luxury; the great majority of us are doomed to live in poverty. If we do not change these policies, certainly we will never be able to overcome the issue of poverty that we face as Presidents and Governments around the world.

If we wish to make progress, it is our obligation to attain the Millennium Development Goals. And in order to reach those goals, the South has to stop financing the North. This new millennium should see the closure of the open veins of the South that are bleeding towards the North. According to the 2010 "World Economic Situation and Prospects" report of the United Nations, developing countries as a whole transferred $891 billion to developed countries in 2008 and $568 billion in 2009. These figures are, respectively, eight and five times the total official development assistance received by developing countries, which amounts to only $120 billion per year.

What we must discuss at this meeting is how to stop this pillage of the South's resources and how to invest the money — in education and health to be sure — and how to confront the challenges of poverty in our countries. However, I would say from my country's own experience that we should discuss how to invest in sport, not just as a way for the peoples of the world to interact, but also as an investment in childhood and, especially, youth and in keeping young people away from wickedness. Heads of State or Government know how in some social groups in some countries, our young people are losing their values. In our experience, sport helps us substantially to protect children from evil. More investment in sport will ensure that the world's young people will have values.

We should invest in harmony so that we can live with Mother Earth. We should promote the rights of Mother Earth in order to save humanity.

Here, I want to raise four important points, four measures that could help us decrease poverty in the world. First, we should nationalize and reclaim our natural resources. We should also reclaim our privatized State companies, especially those which provide basic services, so that the dividends that they generate will remain in our countries and benefit our peoples. Essentially, that is how to democratize the economy to benefit our peoples with their abandoned majorities.

Secondly, we should establish sovereign rules for foreign investment which ensure that the greater part of profits go to the State and that profits are reinvested in the country. What we say in Bolivia is that we want partners, not bosses. We need investment, but the investors cannot become the owners of our natural resources. The State must rule; the State must be the absolute owner of our natural resources.

Thirdly, I would like to say that all basic services should be a human right: drinking water and water for irrigation, and energy — light and communication. That is enormously important for poor people. And I reiterate once again the subject of sport.

Basic services cannot be a private business. The moment basic services become a private business we have automatically, indirectly or directly, violated human rights. If we are trying to defend human rights, all basic services must be a human right. In my personal capacity and on behalf of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, I thank the United Nations for having recognized water as a human right throughout the world. Now, we must figure out how to implement and apply that in our countries.

My fourth point is that, instead of placing our international reserves in the banks of developed countries, we should establish a bank of the South. I propose that this encompass not only South America, but all countries of the South — Africa, the Americas and Asia, including China. We should establish a bank of the South for all developing countries with a percentage of our international reserves so that we can finance ourselves without conditions or structural adjustments and, in that way, break our dependency on the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

I would like to relate one small part of my experience in my four and a half years as President. When Bolivia was subject to the International Monetary Fund, it never rose. Now that we have freed ourselves from the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank — and we welcome the World Bank's current support of our national policies — we trust that we have freed ourselves not only socially, culturally and nationally, but also financially and economically. Without the International Monetary Fund, we are better off now than before. That is our experience. We do not want so-called structural adjustment policies, which oppress our society, in particular economically. I therefore pray that we can all achieve that great financial and economic freedom.

If, according to United Nations data, extreme poverty in Bolivia has dropped from 41 per cent to 32 per cent and the infant mortality rate has decreased by 40 per cent, it is because we have regained control of our natural resources and State companies. Thanks to that, we have increased our income and been able to transfer resources and services directly to the population through various bonds and securities. Since we democratized the national economy, the people have had access to new economic resources and there has been economic activity. And when there is economic activity, there is a domestic market. With a domestic market, there is economic growth. I know that this is not enough, but that is our experience to date.

We have eradicated illiteracy in Bolivia after 184 years of existence as a nation. As a plurinational State, we can say that we have been able to eradicate illiteracy thanks to South-South cooperation. I pay

respectful tribute to the Cuban people and their unconditional assistance, together with Venezuela, in eradicating illiteracy in Bolivia.

In addition, the poorest 40 per cent of the world's population now control only 5 per cent of global income, while the world's wealthiest 20 per cent enjoy 75 per cent of world income, according to a 2009 United Nations report. That is an unfair distribution. We will not be able to meet the Millennium Development Goals if we do not put an end to that inequality and disparity. The unfair distribution of wealth is the main reason for our inability to meet the Millennium Development Goals, and our task should be to end that unfair distribution.

The requirement that the developed countries meet their commitment to allotting barely 0.7 per cent of their gross domestic product to official development assistance is not a gift, but part of their debt to the South. It is unacceptable and unimaginable that we devote 15 times more money to defence, security and war. What is war? It is putting an end to life. In this millennium, we are not here to end lives, but to save them.

However, instead of waiting for the North's help, as countries of the South we should make use of our strengths, our values, our natural resources and our unity in order to address matters. While we endlessly wait for the North, we hurt ourselves by not seeing to our needs.

As elected authorities, in particular, we must understand that we are not public officials; we are civil servants. We must start decolonizing the mentality of the Governments democratically elected by our peoples, and if we understand that to be in authority is to serve the people, and not be served by the people, I am sure that we will decrease the poverty in our countries.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Treki) (*spoke in Arabic*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Mwai Kibaki, President of the Republic of Kenya.

President Kibaki: At the very outset, I take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Joseph Deiss on his election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session. I also thank you, Sir, for the skilful and able manner in which you are steering this important meeting on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Like many developing countries, Kenya recognizes that the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals is an important vehicle for addressing the problems that continue to afflict humanity. With only five years left until the target date of 2015, this meeting provides us with a unique opportunity to review the progress made, draw lessons learned and chart out a plan of action that creates the necessary impetus for the attainment of all the MDGs.

Kenya has registered considerable economic growth, ranging from less than 5.5 per cent in 2002 to 7 per cent in 2007. However, our economic growth rate slowed down in the last two years, due to the global economic and financial crisis, volatile energy and food prices and climate change, as well as internal difficulties. However, I am optimistic that with the recent enactment of a new constitution — which is in tandem with the aspirations of our people — and our economic blueprint, known as Vision 2030, we are destined for accelerated growth.

Moreover, the new constitution has introduced a two-tier Government structure at national and devolved county levels. The constitution also commits not less than 15 per cent of the national budget to the counties, up from the 2.5 per cent previously available through the constituency development fund. It is expected that the higher budgetary allocation to the counties will have a major impact on improving health and education services, while also creating employment and reducing poverty at the grassroots level.

I am proud to state that Kenya has made tremendous strides towards the achievement of universal primary education. In 2003, my Government introduced free and compulsory primary education, which covers eight years of universal education. Consequently, school enrolment increased from 5.9 million children in 2002 to 8.6 million in 2009. Net enrolments have risen from 77 per cent in 2002 to 93 per cent in 2009. In addition, Kenya has introduced tuition-free secondary education, leading to phenomenal growth in the transition rate from 46 per cent in 2002-2003 to 70 per cent in 2009.

Kenya has also taken bold affirmative action in promoting gender equality and empowering women and girls across all sectors. As a result, enrolment in primary schools has nearly attained gender parity.

Similarly, the admission of girls to secondary and tertiary institutions has also increased significantly. The new constitution will significantly bridge the remaining gaps, as it allocates at least 30 per cent of all public appointments, and representation in Parliament and local authorities, to women.

Child mortality rates are a basic indicator of a country's socio-economic development and quality of life. We have therefore taken measures to reduce the incidence of preventable diseases by, among other things, increasing immunization coverage to more than 80 per cent of children aged between 12 and 23 months. In addition, we have been expanding public health facilities and hiring more trained health personnel, as well as improving drug accessibility. With the support of development partners, the Government has distributed free treated mosquito nets to about 68 per cent of households to combat malaria.

The HIV/AIDS prevalence rate has fallen from 13 per cent in 1994 to 6.3 per cent in 2009, due to the provision of voluntary counselling and testing services and national campaigns on safe-sex practices. In addition, drugs for the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV are freely available in most public health facilities. Although we are faced with constraints on resources, we are scaling up our antiretroviral therapy coverage to keep those infected alive for as long as possible. With other diseases, such as tuberculosis and malaria, we have also made significant progress, with better curative methods and more preventive measures.

Climate change, biodiversity loss, natural disasters and ecosystem degradation continue to undermine efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, particularly in developing countries. The frequency and intensity of unforeseen and unpredictable weather patterns, resulting in floods, landslides, droughts and famine, is alarming. In recognition of these realities, Kenya has integrated climate-change issues into Government policies and plans, ensuring that robust measures are undertaken to increase resilience through appropriate adaptation and mitigation measures.

I must emphasize that global partnerships for development are a critical catalyst for the achievement of all Millennium Development Goals. However, it is regrettable that we have lagged behind in delivering this important target. There has been no significant progress in negotiations of the Doha development agenda. We are also yet to conclude a multilateral trading system arrangement that delivers real and substantial benefits to developing countries. Fairer trade practices should be promoted, while the transfer of appropriate technologies that increase production and productivity should be enhanced among developing countries.

In the same vein, development support has been inadequate and therefore unable to significantly raise production capacity and trade in poor countries. Consequently, most developing countries have diverted resources from Millennium Development Goal-related priorities to servicing high external debt. We must deal comprehensively with the debt burden of developing countries through innovative and more effective debt relief measures. I therefore propose that debt sustainability be defined in terms of a country's capacity to meet the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

Furthermore, the international community committed itself to fighting poverty, alleviating human development and facilitating the more effective integration of developing countries into the global economy. These commitments have subsequently been reaffirmed in various international conferences, including the 2005 World Summit here in New York. To ensure that the Millennium Development Goals are achieved globally, it is important that developed countries honour their pledges, including those made at the July 2005 meeting of the Group of Eight in Gleneagles.

In conclusion, I thank the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly for the wise decision to convene this meeting. I am confident that this meeting will create renewed impetus and momentum to push the entire world towards the realization of the Millennium Development Goals by the year 2015. Let us act now. We must not fail the billions of citizens of the world who look upon us for leadership.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Shimon Peres, President of the State of Israel.

President Peres: History is written in blood. Most wars have been waged over territory. Today science, creativity and knowledge replace land as the

most important source of wealth. Land can be conquered, but science cannot. Science is global and borderless. Armies cannot conquer science. Still, lawless terrorists spread violence caused by ideological differences, social gaps and sheer fanaticism. The new millennium must liberate the world from bloodshed, from discrimination, from hunger, from ignorance and from maladies. Modern science is capable of providing new answers.

I speak on behalf of a small people and a tiny land. We knew rebirth despite the murder of one third of our people — the *Shoah*. We were alone then. Then again, over the past 62 years our land has been attacked seven times; again, we have been alone. But never giving up hope, we developed science as compensation. We have found that the future was finally in our hands. We have learned that people can enrich land no less than land can nourish the people.

Israel is a product of the pioneering human spirit, not of financial investment. In spite of wars, we made peace with Egypt and Jordan. The territorial dispute with Lebanon has ended and has been acknowledged so by the United Nations. We left Gaza completely on our own initiative. We are now negotiating with the Palestinians in order to realize the two-State solution: a Jewish State, Israel; and an Arab State, Palestine. There is no other peaceful alternative to that conflict, and I believe that we shall succeed in spite of the difficulties. We are ready to enter into direct negotiations with Syria right away.

We are all committed to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). We share the burden of saving the world from war and hunger. Without peace, poverty will remain. Without food, peace will not prevail. Statesmen have to mobilize political power to achieve peace. Scientists should enable all people and the land to produce more food. We have developed an agriculture that is based on science. We employ desalination, recycling, drip and electronic irrigation and bio-engineering to create new seeds and richer crops.

Five decades ago, an Israeli farmer produced food for 15 persons. Today, the same farmer produces food for 120 persons — eight times more. The farmer's contribution to the gross domestic product equals that of a high-tech engineer.

To cultivate land, you have to cultivate education and improve health. So we introduced free compulsory education for all from ages 5 to 18 and brought illiteracy to an end. That also provided us with the highest rate of scientists per square mile in the world. The national health-care system provides world-class treatment for every citizen.

I am confident that our path is available to everyone. Our experience is replicable. We are ready to share our experience, as we have already with many countries, both through United Nations organizations and bilaterally. Our call includes nations that do not even have diplomatic ties with us.

The other day, the formal leader of Iran declared there is no future for Israel in the Middle East. I believe that the Middle East has room for every person, every nation, every religion. I believe that every person was created in the image of the Lord, and there's just one Lord who calls — not to hate, not to threaten, not to seek superiority, not to kill. There is enough room in the Middle East for friendship.

In my youth, I was a member of a kibbutz, cultivating poor land. Like all members of the kibbutz, I owned two shirts and two pairs of pants. There was a third pair of pants, made of flannel and reserved for grooms only. I was lucky to wear those pants for two full days during my own wedding. The main dish in the kibbutz was eggplants. Meat was available once a week, and not every week. There was no private money and little collective money.

We were poor and happy — the sort of happiness felt when a person as is turning desert into garden. Today my kibbutz has a thriving agriculture and a profitable guest house. Food is plentiful. It is in the kibbutz, in scarcity, where I learned to respect pioneers and developed an affinity for creative minds and labouring hands. Actually, my early dream was to see the world as a sort of great kibbutz — free, peaceful, productive.

I call upon this important gathering to address the two burning challenges of our time: first, to harness science and technology to increase food production for every child, for every family. And second, to stand together against terror. A hungry world will never be peaceful. A terrorized world will never be governable. We should unite around a common hope. The cradle of our children shall be the cradle of our vision.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by

Mr. Álvaro Colom Caballeros, President of the Republic of Guatemala.

President Colom Caballeros (*spoke in Spanish*): For us, the Millennium Declaration of 2000 and its subsequent codification into the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) was one of the greatest achievements of the United Nations in terms of moving towards the great objective of promoting the economic and social progress of all peoples.

Therefore, as I address this Assembly, we must recognize that Guatemala is making progress, but not at the pace required. In some categories, we have even suffered setbacks. We have reason to congratulate ourselves for the fact that 29 out of 49 indicators reflect a positive trend towards reaching the MDGs. However, there are 15 other indicators in which little progress has been made, and five others for which further setbacks are anticipated. Detailed information can be found in the document we have circulated today.

I would like to emphasize that the fight against poverty is a fight to invest in those who have less so that all of us can have more. We must invest in those areas that have been devastated by the abuses of the past.

Climate change is greatly affecting the world. Guatemala is one of the four countries in the world most vulnerable to climate change. The effects of climate change have led us to more noble investments and to fight against this aggression of nature. We have recently spent 109 days with a total state of emergency following an eruption, a tropical storm and two tropical depressions. It stopped raining only nine days ago.

Those severe effects that we are subject to again and again are causing an increase in cases of malnutrition, including severe malnutrition in children, and are leading to stagnation in the chronic malnutrition indicator. Different indicators can be seen in different parts of the country, depending on the region. However, we cannot deny that those indicators require major and sustained investment in the areas where our indigenous people live, in particular for the benefit of women and children.

My Government's policy of social cohesion, begun in 2008, has had results. We have been able to make substantive advances in education. Just from one year to the next, we increased enrolment in schools by 37 per cent, 27 per cent in basic education, 9 per cent in primary and 27 per cent in pre-school. That is an historic advance for the country. In the last eight years, the number of young people and children who are now exercising their right to education has grown.

The programme of conditional monetary transfers, "Mi Familia Progresa", has succeeded to the extent that more than 140,000 families are now able to take their children to schools and clinics. However, it is most likely that the policy that yielded the most social benefits was the exercise of the constitutional right of the people of Guatemala to completely free public health services and education. We have integrated into this policy the "Open Schools" scholarship programme, which is enabling young people to attend school through subsidies. Thanks to these programmes, Guatemala is experiencing its strongest growth of the past 15 years. I also wish to stress that we have focused our efforts on working to reduce the incidence of chronic malnutrition and to address the crisis of extreme malnutrition, based on an integrated vision of nutritional and food security that links attending to emergency situations to interventions aimed at improving access to, availability and better use of food. We have enjoyed unconditional support from the international community.

I stress my commitment to laying the foundations to ensure that in the remaining five years we will reach a safe port and achieve the MDGs. We also understand the urgency of addressing the fiscal restrictions that the Guatemalan public sector has historically faced, as well as the need to professionalize our civil service.

Finally, our efforts to tackle development must be reconciled with those addressing the emergency we are currently facing. The $1 billion in losses we endured in the recent storms weakened our Government's financial capacities and compel us to call for international solidarity. In that respect, at a donors conference to be held in mid-October, we will inform our friends and institutional partners of the challenges we face in addressing this natural disaster. I thank everyone, including the Co-Chairs and the Secretary-General, for their special focus on Guatemala in the current emergency.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Majesty King Abdullah II Bin Al Hussein, Head of State of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

King Abdullah Bin Al Hussein: Ten years ago, meeting here, our countries began an unprecedented effort to end human poverty. The Millennium Development Goals spoke to some of the most important truths of the twenty-first century: that global security and prosperity are in danger while billions of people live in want; that our modern era offers the knowledge, and our world has the resources, to end this threat, and lift lives everywhere; and that developing countries and donor countries alike have vital responsibilities if we are to succeed.

Today, our 15-year timeline to achieve the Millennium Goals has only five years to go and real work lies ahead. We meet this week to energize a fresh drive forward. There is every reason to succeed. Each gain we make reinforces others, from better education and health care to higher living standards; from empowered women and youth to greater economic opportunity. By integrating this work into national and global strategies, we can maximize change, but we cannot consolidate our gains without ensuring the conditions that development depends on: peace, partnership and global opportunity.

The foundations are in place. Our world understands more than ever before that a developing country must own its path to development. There are no one-size-fits-all, outside-in solutions. But the developed countries have deep interests in supporting global advances, and important tools to do so. Their commitment is essential during times of global economic crisis, not only to raise the world's poorest people, but also to support and sustain those who are implementing good policies until their progress can be stabilized.

In Jordan, partnership — public and private — has long been part of our development success. We have integrated the Millennium Goals into our national strategy of structural reform, sustainable economic growth and sound development. We have worked not only to scale up development efforts, but to scale out, expanding participation and taking advantage of synergies in many fields. Today, due to the work of thousands of Jordanians in schools, in health care and in communities across the country, we are in the process of achieving many of our Millennium Goals. Goal 2, for example — ensuring that all children enrol in primary school and stay in school, ending youth illiteracy and giving our students the foundations they need to advance in life — has effectively been achieved.

One burden — the lack of regional peace — faces development across our region. When warfare and violence divert resources from social needs and economic growth, economies and community life are undermined and poverty and frustration grow. Development programmes can help build a foundation for peace, but they ultimately depend on peace to succeed in the long term. This is why friends of development must also be friends of peace. The Middle East has long been denied the peace that could unleash its enormous potential for development. We count on the support of the international community to help us reach a comprehensive regional peace, which can be realized only through the resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict on the basis of the two-State solution.

Jordan stands ready to work with the General Assembly to address our countries' shared concerns and meet the Millennium Goals. In the five years that remain until 2015, much can be achieved. I believe that, together, we can make life better for all our peoples. Let us combine our will with our wisdom, and move forward now.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Lyonchoen Jigmi Yoezer Thinley, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bhutan.

Mr. Thinley (Bhutan): Ten years ago, we pledged to galvanize a partnership of rich and poor countries to eradicate extreme poverty, hunger and disease. To these, my delegation shall humbly propose the inclusion of a ninth Goal.

I am happy to report that my country is well on its way to fulfilling the MDGs, with most goals to be achieved before the deadline of 2015. For this, I wish to express our deep appreciation to our development partner countries, the United Nations and other multilateral agencies for their generous assistance. The World Bank and Asian Development Bank are to be thanked in particular for their focus on the MDGs through such windows as the International Development Association.

As all nations rise above the threats posed to basic survival, what will our collective endeavour be as a progressive society? Must we continue to believe that human life is to be spent labouring for higher income

so as to be able to consume more at the cost of relationships, peace and ecological stability? Could we not find a way to steer ourselves from the self-consuming fire of greed that is fuelled by the media and paid for by industry and commerce, which thrive on reckless consumerism? Has human civilization not reached the time and moment to aspire to a higher goal as individuals and nations, and as a society? And should we not hope that the pursuit of such a state of being will be more of the kind that refines the mind, disciplines the body and conserves the life-supporting environment?

Enough thoughts and knowledge have been generated in recent years by those who care to convince us that humanity needs to get off the perilous path on which the wrongful use of gross domestic product has set it. We need to understand that the endless pursuit of material growth in a finite world within a delicately balanced ecology is just not sustainable.

The evidence of the limited capacity of nature to tolerate abuse is there for us to suffer as we confront the rising frequency and fury of multiple calamities. I refer not only to natural and man-made disasters such those that struck the innocent millions in Pakistan and that destroyed much of a way of life in the Gulf of Mexico. I refer also to economic calamities such as the current recession, which has reminded us that much of the so-called wealth we have created is, in fact, illusory and that, being unreal, it often disappears without a trace, as have jobs, homes, savings, investments and more. The only real things are the psychological, emotional and environmental costs.

The good thing is there are an increasing number of people who acknowledge the futility of our way of life and are pleading for an alternative way to live a good and decent life. The MDGs are one set of indicators or contributions, and here I commend the Secretary-General and his adviser, Professor Jeffrey Sachs, for their vision and commitment.

It was some four decades ago that Bhutan, for its part, chose not to be led astray by conventional development practices. Having pondered the meaning and purpose of development and being dissatisfied with the aimlessness of prevailing models, our King's understanding of the innermost yearning of his people inspired him to conceive the development philosophy of gross national happiness (GNH). It is based on the belief that since happiness is the ultimate desire of every citizen, it must be the purpose of development to create the enabling conditions for happiness. His understanding of happiness is a state of being that is realized through a judicious equilibrium between gains in material comfort and growth of the mind and spirit in a just and sustainable environment. It is not about asceticism and denial. Consequently, our small success in balancing the needs of the body with those of the mind, with visible ecological benefits, has raised a level of interest in GNH as a holistic development paradigm.

With these thoughts in mind, and as it is likely that the relevance of the eight MDGs will remain beyond 2015, my delegation would like to propose that we include happiness as the ninth MDG. I hear some laughter, and I see many smiles. It is a goal that stands as a separate value while representing as well the sum total outcome of the other eight. Its relevance goes beyond the poor and developing Member States to bind all of humanity, rich and poor, to a timeless common vision. It will be in the conscious pursuit of happiness that the very best in the nature of the human race will flourish. Through the pursuit of such a goal, we will find the reason and genius to moderate and harmonize our otherwise largely material wants with the other equally important human needs and nature's limitations. It is what will make life on Earth sustainable. And the way in which a nation pursues this goal will be a measure of its devotion to the promotion of its people's true well-being. We must not lose time and opportunity to work in concert at all levels of society for the collective pursuit of this ultimate value through public policy, plans and programmes.

The inclusion of happiness as the ninth dimension of the MDGs will confirm we are concerned with the quality of life — with adding meaning and value to life. Its inclusion will be a broader outcome indicator of life, to which all the other elements of the MDGs contribute. Above all, it will enhance the feasibility of moving towards a more responsible human endeavour that bears the promise of meaningful pursuit, fulfilment and happiness. Based on the set of elaborate and precise metrics developed by Bhutan and others, we could leave the task of adopting or developing indicators for uniform application to the experts.

Hope has prevailed against cynicism to bring us to the United Nations today. Let us go forth from this summit not only rededicated to the eight goals to

banish hunger, disease, and extreme poverty, but also to the new ninth voluntary goal: to achieve a world that can sustain happiness for all its people, today and for generations yet to be born.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss): I thank the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bhutan for his message of happiness.

(*spoke in French*)

The General Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, President of the Government of the Kingdom of Spain.

Mr. Rodríguez Zapatero (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): This year, we are holding a special summit 10 years after the nations of the world endorsed a historic agreement to reduce extreme poverty by 2015 to levels compatible with the human conscience and with human dignity.

Ten years later, we must congratulate the United Nations on that initiative. It has brought about the clearest and most broadly shared mobilization in history towards eradicating the poverty, extreme poverty, despair and illiteracy that we still find in so many parts of the world.

Ten years later, progress has been made, although not all the progress we would like and not all the progress deserved by the countries that suffer the most from the hardships of poverty and extreme poverty. But we now know, 10 years later, that it is possible to achieve the Goals in the next five years. We now know that, if each country fulfils its commitments, progress will be significant and decisive.

Spain is the developed country that has increased its development assistance the most over the past five years. Spain has doubled its development assistance over that period. Spain has become a crucial United Nations system donor, especially in the struggle for food security, the fight for gender equality and efforts to decry the fact that poverty almost always affects women the most. It is in the struggle to empower women and to attain equal rights that we will truly be able to achieve the Millennium Goals.

We have five years ahead of us, and the key question is: what is needed? What do we need in order to fulfil the Millennium Goals? Will our generation be able to feel worthy in our own eyes and in the eyes of future generations? Will we be able to say in this great institution — this common house that is the house of peace and of development and that provides the response to major crises — that we were aware of the historic challenge, that we stood in solidarity and that we understood, at the dawn of this new twenty-first century, that nothing can help us as human beings make progress more than ensuring that there is no single human being dying from extreme poverty? That would be the most significant progress that we could make at this stage.

How can we do this? In two ways. First, countries must keep up our effort and our attention to development assistance despite the crisis, which could cause some of us to let up in the trend to increased that we have put in motion. However, that will only be a temporary setback. Spain reiterates its objective to achieve by 2015 a level of 0.7 per cent for development, after having gone from 0.2 to 0.45 per cent in the last five years.

Secondly, national efforts are not enough. Let us say this clearly here, once and for all, before all the citizens of the world: all Governments should clearly state that we must have a tax on international financial transactions that is dedicated to achieving the Millennium Goals. For that purpose, my Government commits itself to defending that principle, putting it into practice and implementing it in all international forums.

The financial system, which has experienced a serious crisis, has seen countries stand up for it and come to its rescue. It therefore seems sensible, just and logical for countries to undertake a minimal effort on the functioning of the financial system, in order to bring millions and millions of human beings out of extreme poverty, so that, by the year 2015, we can stand here and say that we have finished our task, we have fulfilled our commitment and our common efforts have been worthwhile.

To recapitulate: first, countries must continue to maintain their efforts for development aid and, secondly, we must set in motion innovative sources of financing to meet the Millennium Goals. The clearest and most direct one is a tax on international financial transactions.

Spain is committed to this and will defend it in the Group of Twenty, the European Union, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and all other multilateral organizations so

that we can reach an international agreement that will enable so many people — non-governmental organizations and individual citizens around the world who look to this Organization and to their Governments — to say that the time has come. With a small effort by everyone in the international financial system, we can meet the Millennium Goals and eradicate extreme poverty. We have to do it and we will do it.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Igor Lukšić, Deputy Prime Minister of Montenegro.

Mr. Lukšić (Montenegro): Let me begin by commending the Secretary-General for initiating this extremely important meeting towards accomplishing our common mission: to accelerate progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The organization of this summit reaffirms the importance of sitting down together to agree on concerted action in dealing with present-day challenges.

Our common reality at the beginning of this millennium has been characterized by unforeseen challenges. Therefore, a development philosophy that underscores the need for cooperation and the interdependence of States and entities is more important than ever before, as is, thus, the role of the United Nations as the broadest multilateral forum.

Agreement on and general acceptance of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have enabled an exchange of experience and expertise aimed at finding the best solutions to achieve those targets. In addition to their universal applicability, the MDGs lend themselves well to national particularities and circumstances. That is a crucial value of this process.

Montenegro remains firmly resolved to act vigorously and continuously to carry out the commitments as well as to lend support to strengthen the coordination of the relevant entities at the global level. Montenegro's Millennium Development Goals midterm report, submitted in the run-up to the summit, reflects our commitment to take responsibility for implementing our national development policy. The report defines 44 targets for the first seven Millennium Goals, which are specific to Montenegro on its path to achieving sustained progress towards full membership in the European Union and NATO.

The targets have been set ambitiously, but we are confident that they are realistic and attainable. The strategic development priorities under which we have defined the targets set in the report are based on implementing sustainable development principles, with increasing economic freedoms and a strengthened role for the private sector, advancing the rule of law as the precondition for a functioning market democracy and improving the living standards of all our citizens by promoting quality public services through effective education, health care and social welfare systems. In that way, Montenegro clearly demonstrates and reaffirms its commitment to incorporating into its national policies obligations undertaken under international agreements, initiatives and declarations. The Millennium Development Goals are crucial to the United Nations development agenda. Their achievement on schedule is one of Montenegro's most important obligations.

Over the past 10 years, Montenegro has made considerable progress in the areas of economic stability and legislative reform by adopting strategic planning documents and policies harmonized with policy and legislative requirements of the European Union and international conventions. The platform for achieving the Millennium Development Goals has been put in place with the adoption of a national strategy for sustainable development.

The results of reforms in Montenegro are visible. According to the findings of the MDG mid-term report, despite variable progress in different areas, by 2015 Montenegro will have succeeded in achieving almost all the tasks set at the national level under the MDGs. The most important challenges to Montenegro's long-term development are those of further reducing regional economic, social and cultural disparities and social exclusion, as well as strengthening the rule of law and ensuring the closer integration of environmental issues into sector-specific development policies and strategies. As in most countries, achieving gender equality is an area where the pace of progress has been the least dynamic.

What I have referred to calls for investing considerable additional resources in education, science and research programmes, in projects involving management and the application of cleaner technologies and in the development of an information and communication society. Particularly important among those, I would like to highlight a programme

that Montenegro is implementing with much success, together with organizations of the United Nations system. Montenegro participates in the delivering as one programme, the system of comprehensive United Nations activities that enables United Nations agencies and the Government to maximize potential at the local and national levels.

Montenegro is also paying particular attention to building good relations with its neighbours and to promoting regional cooperation on an institutional basis. In that regard, Montenegro fully supports a renewed commitment by the EU and developed countries to increase and enhance aid to developing countries and to give additional attention to the countries, regions and goals that are lagging behind the most.

The global challenges we face offer a unique opportunity for coherent, adequate and timely action by the international community. We therefore see today's meeting as an opportunity to once again underscore the need to keep the promise made here 10 years ago. In that important mission, Montenegro will be a reliable and responsible partner. We therefore support the adoption of the draft outcome document (A/65/L.1), as it reaffirms our commitment and our clear plans to fully achieve the Goals at all levels.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Victor Bodiu, Minister of State of the Republic of Moldova.

Mr. Bodiu (Republic of Moldova): At the outset, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for convening this High-level Plenary Meeting, which provides us with a platform for sharing knowledge and best practices on the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) over the past 10 years and to set priority actions to accelerate the achievement of the MDGs in the next five years.

We entirely support the provisions of the draft outcome document of the High-level Plenary Meeting (A/65/L.1) and look forward to its implementation.

The Republic of Moldova has integrated the Millennium Development Goals into its national development strategy and sectoral plans, with clear and measurable targets and the setting of performance evaluation indicators for its national policies. Two weeks ago, in the presence of Ms. Helen Clark, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme and Chair of the United Nations Development Group, we launched our second national MDG report, which presents an accurate analysis of achievements and sets the targets and objectives to be reached by 2015.

Over the past several years, the Republic of Moldova has registered mixed but overall positive progress in reaching the Millennium Development Goals. The majority of indicators show progress, even if in certain areas the pace is still not sufficient to attain all the targets that have been set.

Despite the fact that Moldova is still recovering from the global economic crisis and was severely hit by floods in July, the Government is committed to sustaining progress in the targets it has achieved and to gradually speed up its actions to reach all national targets by 2015. The leadership of Moldova has the vision, ownership and determination to make that happen.

Moldova has had notable achievements in reducing poverty in the midst of a severe economic crisis. The Government has succeeded in halting the increase in extreme and absolute poverty, even reversing the trend through the efficient introduction and expansion of a needs-based social assistance programme and by increasing access to mandatory health insurance for the most vulnerable.

Our country has succeeded in reducing infant and maternal mortality. We are making progress in terms of the level of penetration of information technologies. We have also achieved positive results in gender mainstreaming, combating trafficking in persons and domestic violence and increasing the representation of women in decision-making.

The Republic of Moldova still faces challenges that impede the full implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, but we shall build on successful policies and positive achievements to accelerate progress in other areas.

Moldova is undergoing a transformation process that requires a comprehensive approach to setting development priorities and selecting the most effective and equitable solutions. Change is the product of comprehensive programmes with multiple effects and targeted interventions in specific areas.

Our Government is currently working on a national plan to accelerate the achievement of the

MDGs that will translate into concrete actions the recommendations of our second national report. We are determined to promote sectoral policies to target areas where indicators show less success in terms achieving the MDGs. Our key priorities are to improve health education in schools, ensure wider coverage of the social protection network, expand environmental sustainability programmes, optimize school and hospital infrastructure, and ensure better social inclusion of vulnerable groups.

The Government of Moldova would like to express its gratitude to the agencies and Office of the United Nations in Moldova, as well as to all our development partners, for the support we have received in implementing, monitoring and evaluating progress on the MDGs. I would like to emphasize our appreciation for the close partnership Moldova has enjoyed over the past two decades with the World Bank and the International Development Association (IDA). We call on donor countries to generously support IDA in its current round of replenishment so that it can continue to be a strong partner for developing countries like Moldova in their efforts to achieve the MDGs.

The Government of Moldova reaffirms its determination to work together for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all people.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Micheline Calmy-Rey, Federal Councillor and head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland.

Ms. Calmy-Rey (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): The turn of the new millennium was a splendid period in our history. There was optimism in the air. The community of States was marching towards new horizons. The economy was booming. Almost everything seemed possible, even achieving the greatest global challenge of all, namely, reducing poverty. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) reflect a historic consensus. They have focused political will and financing on the resolution of an issue that is and must remain crucial for us, the wealthiest countries of the planet.

If that euphoria is slightly tempered today it is because, despite success achieved in many spheres, we have not achieved what we wanted to achieve. Progress in the reduction of the number of poor people worldwide, in the access to primary education and drinking water, in gender equality is insufficient.

While it is true that poverty has gone down in several large emerging countries, the crucial factor, however, has not been development aid. Are we, donor countries, on the wrong track? Are we not doing enough? Are the Governments of our partner States not doing enough? Is the international system of production and trade conceived in a way that works against poor countries? Those are all questions we need to answer.

A more analytical approach shows that the majority of the countries and regions that are off track on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals are characterized by fragility of State institutions, conflict or a high level of armed violence. In any case, measures adapted to those situations must be taken to ensure the provision of basic services in such difficult environments, to combat the causes of conflict and violence and to ensure that lasting peace and the rule of law are re-established and that national institutions can once again function properly.

Perhaps we have given to ourselves an impossible task. Perhaps the link between the achievement of the Millennium Goals and other development objectives is less tight than it looks. In our globalized world, the cause of development requires a partnership based on mutual accountability. In that context, donors have the responsibility to support the efforts of poor countries in a manner that is transparent, predictable and consistent with their national policies. For their part, the authorities of those countries have a responsibility to deliver effective, participative and democratic policies.

Perhaps we have underestimated the importance of human rights in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Their achievement requires an effort to include all social groups. However, in many cases many people are excluded or marginalized, mostly women and minorities. Respect for human rights, non-discrimination and the right to participate in the political, economic and social life of the country are absolutely basic if we want to achieve the Millennium Goals.

Perhaps we have focused too much on the symptoms and not enough on the causes of poverty and destitution. To assist those suffering hardship is a fine and supportive gesture. But development, as we all know, goes much further than that. Development means creating the economic foundations for the improved well-being of all. For a poor country, it also

means carving out a place in the production process and in global and regional trade, increasing agricultural production and improving food security. Furthermore, it means laying down principles of the rule of law for the private sector, be it local, regional or transnational. Finally, it requires that the State's revenues be increased by appropriate taxation of both enterprises and individuals in order to ensure the financing of health and education services delivered by the State.

In the year 2000, climate change had not yet become a core issue in the development debate. It is very different today. We are all aware that, beyond taking indispensable mitigating measures, the task of adapting to climate change will be a vital part of our efforts, especially in the developing countries. There is a real risk that the changing climate could trigger forced migration in many countries, spilling over into potential conflicts over access to water and arable land. To avert that situation, the risks in each country must be estimated and an action plan drawn up to respond to catastrophic situations, and our readiness to intervene in situations of hardship must be made clear.

In this context, greater efforts must be made to stabilize the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and to achieve the aims of the Framework Convention on Climate Change and of the Kyoto Protocol. Here, the importance of defining credible and achievable objectives for the period after 2012 is absolutely crucial and, I believe, cannot be exaggerated.

I believe that international cooperation is facing some major changes. The economic success of China, India, Brazil and other emerging countries is forcing us to confront an obvious truth: the limits of what is ecologically sustainable will soon be reached if seven billion people begin to produce as much CO_2 and consume as much water and other natural resources as we already do in the countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. Justice and equity, previously considered as purely ethical issues, are now becoming imperatives of realpolitik. The distribution of resources among the inhabitants of the planet must become genuinely equitable. The transition to a green economy is more than ever necessary and urgent.

Achieving the Millennium Development Goals remains a concern. Switzerland will persevere with its full commitment to this aim. Our country's development aid is concentrated essentially on the poorest nations, with its principal focus on sectors linked to the Millennium Goals.

The fact that I have spoken a great deal today about development is no accident. I believe that in the coming five years, and beyond 2015, the international community needs to debate more openly and directly the reasons why development is stagnating or progressing so sluggishly, and then set its objectives accordingly.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to Mr. Bhim Bahadur Rawal, Minister for Home Affairs of Nepal.

Mr. Rawal (Nepal): The solemn commitments made by world leaders in the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2) and subsequently in the 2005 World Summit Outcome of 2005 (resolution 60/1) provide a foundation for a global partnership to work towards a better future for all. At the dawn of the millennium, we collectively committed ourselves to reducing poverty and hunger, promoting health and education and minimizing environmental damage through a global partnership.

Our efforts over the years have produced mixed results, with successes and shortcomings. However, progress has been uneven among and within countries. In particular, the least developed countries (LDCs) lag starkly behind others as a group. Against the backdrop of the prevalent dehumanizing conditions of poverty and hunger as well as entrenched structural constraints in the least developed countries, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) cannot be achieved without the LDCs.

MDG targets are fully integrated into Nepal's development policies and programmes. While variations exist at separate levels, Nepal is on the right track, with good progress having been made in meeting some of the targets set out in MDGs 1, 4, 5 and 7. Accelerated efforts will be required to achieve some of the targets in MDGs 2 and 3. We are confronting significant challenges in meeting the targets of full and productive employment and decent work for all, universal access to reproductive health and sustainable access to improved sanitation among other key targets under MDG 7. Those targets will not be met without enhanced and additional support measures from the international community.

Some of our successful national programmes include partnerships for poverty eradication, community management of schools and forests, education-related incentives for girl children and children from poor, marginalized and disadvantaged communities, adult literacy campaigns, social security provisions, targeted development programmes, immunization and maternal health programmes, and progressive realization of the rights of women, including the right to reproductive health. The promotion of alternative and renewable sources of energy and inclusive and participatory governance are some of the other measures and programmes which have proved useful in our national experience.

Poverty and hunger, compounded by continued food insecurity, remain the fundamental challenge to our development efforts. Overcoming that challenge calls for innovative approaches matched by sound institutions, adequate resources, committed programmes, justice and equity in sharing global resources, and above all, a stronger and committed global partnership. The business-as-usual approach will not be sufficient to address the root causes and multidimensional aspects of development challenges.

Countries like Nepal, least developed and landlocked as they are, face severe and additional difficulties. The vicious cycle of the mutually reinforcing and exacerbating impacts of food, energy, economic and financial crises, together with the adverse and disproportionate impacts of climate change, such as the melting of glaciers in the Himalayas and elsewhere, erratic weather patterns and floods, have significantly constrained our efforts to meet the MDGs.

It is this high degree of vulnerability and deep structural constraints that make the LDCs different from other groups of countries. Therefore, we wish to underline that the international community should fully take this into account and give it priority consideration when making decisions on international support measures, including resource allocation.

Global partnership for development is vitally important for all. In this context, we call for the fulfilment of all official development assistance commitments by developed countries in a predictable, transparent and accountable manner. Similarly, there is a need for coherence in international economic and development policies to ensure that there is a cumulative and comprehensive positive impact on the development endeavours of the developing and least developed countries. LDCs have not benefited fully from globalization. That would require the early and effective implementation of trade-related provisions for LDCs, effective and sustainable debt reduction, the facilitation of foreign direct investment, and technology transfers to the LDCs.

National leadership and ownership of the development process, as well as peace and stability, are key to ensuring sustainable development in all countries. But what is equally true is that, given the resource constraints and enormous challenges to LDCs, there is no substitute for a stronger global partnership.

This summit should exhibit a strong political will matched by equal commitment to leveraging required resources to accelerate the progress towards achieving the MDGs by 2015 and, in particular, in the most vulnerable countries, such as the LDCs. As the Secretary-General has rightly pointed out, the failure to achieve the MDG targets would be unacceptable from both the moral and the practical standpoints. The achievement of the MDG targets is therefore critical in the larger interest of promoting sustainable peace, stability and prosperity in the world.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Kasit Piromya, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Thailand.

Mr. Piromya (Thailand): During the decade since the Millennium Declaration was adopted, international and regional circumstances have changed profoundly, posing several threats and challenges to our development. Over the past few years, there have been a sequence of crises, from food and fuel to the financial crisis, and all have rolled back our development efforts. In addition to those crises, the changing climate has proved to be another threat to people's security. Its negative effects include more severe and frequent natural disasters, which badly affect people's lives worldwide. It is obvious that we are at one of the most critical junctures of humankind.

From this day until 2015, the target year for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), there will be several benchmarks relating to sustainable development, including the climate change negotiations and the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. We have to put these jigsaw pieces together to ensure the achievement of

internationally agreed development goals in a sustainable manner. In this connection, I would like to share my thoughts based on the experiences of the Thai Government, as follows.

First, good governance is critical to the establishment of an effective administration that can ensure that people will benefit fairly from development strategies. Decentralization of public administration, including fiscal management and coherence of work among national, regional and local levels, is important. Development plans at the provincial level must be in line with national and regional strategic plans. In Thailand, we have also conducted pilot projects to follow up on the achievement of the MDGs at the provincial level in order to ensure that the benefits of development can be distributed fairly in the community. It is also important to recognize the role of civil society, which can play a vital part in ensuring good governance at all levels. Indeed, before I came to the General Assembly, I had a fruitful meeting with groups from academia and civil society in Thailand to discuss and exchange views on how Thailand should proceed on development to benefit the people, beyond the goals and the date set in the MDGs.

Secondly, the development agenda must be people-oriented or centred. The Royal Thai Government considers people to be the most important and valuable national resource. That is why we have focused our development agenda on human security and human development. With regard to human security, we have implemented several social policies, including social safety nets and public health policies, to ensure greater access to social security services and health care coverage. Economic policies on agriculture and industry are also important to help alleviate poverty and hunger and, in particular, to ensure food security.

With regard to human development, we have focused on education and skills development training. The education system has been reformed to ensure a lifelong learning process and all people's access to equal education, which is cost-free from kindergarten to high school. In addition, the Government has also raised the vocational and tertiary education standards and developed and trained all levels of workers to broaden their knowledge and skills to adapt to technological changes and meet market demand.

Thirdly, it is critical to enhance international cooperation to ensure that developing countries can keep up with development trends and be on track to achieve the MDGs and other internationally agreed development goals. International cooperation, be it traditional North-South, South-South or trilateral cooperation, must be demand-oriented so as to ensure that assistance can fully meet the needs. International cooperation, especially in exchanging knowledge and skills, as well as in providing sound and appropriate technology and technological knowledge to help developing countries deal with the negative effects of climate change, is also critical. Such cooperation would enable developing countries to adapt and implement their development plans in order to achieve the MDGs.

Our emphasis on the people has meant that our development cooperation fully addresses the importance of human security and human development. Thus, we have focused our development cooperation programmes on three major sectors: agricultural development to ensure food security, the enhancement of health services to ensure people's welfare and access to health services, and human resource development to promote capacity-building for individuals and the development of small and medium-sized enterprises as a means to ensure employment and job creation.

Fourthly, it is important not only to achieve the MDGs, but also to ensure the sustainability of development progress. We must think about achieving the MDGs in a more strategic manner by setting some of the Goals — for example, the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger — as immediate targets. Achieving some Goals first can ease the way to achieving the others, and that would make achieving the MDGs more attainable.

For long-term sustainability, it is crucial to advance beyond the MDGs towards sustainable development. In the light of the changing climate, we must ensure that our development process helps enhance economic growth, along with good governance, for the benefit of the people at large, while also saving our country from further environmental degradation.

In closing, I would like to reiterate that in order to pursue sustainable development in all three pillars — economic development, social development and environmental protection — it is important to ensure a

paradigm shift towards more balanced, inclusive and green growth.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to Mr. Christian Onyebuchi Chukwu, Minister of Health of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Mr. Chukwu (Nigeria): This afternoon, I bring greetings and best wishes from Mr. Jonathan Ebele Goodluck, President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and I make the following statement on his behalf.

Today's meeting offers us the opportunity to take stock of the commitments we made a decade ago to significantly and substantially improve the lives of our poor. The passage of time has certainly been imbued with varied experiences and will undoubtedly help us to forge renewed consensus and commitments and redouble our collective global and individual national resolve. This summit is certainly an auspicious moment to report on the progress made, the challenges to and the prospects of reaching the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

We are excited to be part of this event to primarily reset the engine, energize commitments and redirect the global agenda towards the ultimate realization of the MDGs by 2015. I commend Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his leadership in launching the Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health as part of the efforts to re-energize our existing commitments. It is certainly a welcome extension of the Group of Eight Muskoka Declaration on new beginnings, and is also fully compatible with the African Union Actions on Maternal, Newborn and Child Health and Development in Africa by 2015.

Since the year 2000, Nigeria has mainstreamed MDG-related programmes and interventions as part of our periodic development planning and budgeting process. This was given a further boost by Nigeria's negotiation of debt relief, with the gains directly targeted at MDG-related activities since 2005. The MDGs have been fully integrated into medium- and long-term national development strategies. The Government also introduced innovative initiatives to reduce poverty and improve the delivery of public services under pioneering schemes such as the Virtual Poverty Fund, which tags and tracks funds from debt relief allocated to poverty reduction. Also, there are now compulsory free basic education and conditional cash transfers to the vulnerable for social protection, as well as conditional grant schemes through federal grants to support investment in the MDGs by States and local Governments. Such programmes are all part of our determination to achieve the MDGs and to place Nigeria among the top 20 economies of the world by 2020.

Despite our strong determination to implement the MDGs, progress to date has been mixed. Although real progress has been made compared to where we were in 2000, significant challenges remain. For every MDG, there is a positive story to tell, despite variations between and within Goals and indicators. We have recorded substantial growth in the economy, with the real gross domestic product growth rate averaging 6.5 per cent over the past five years. The recent improvement in agricultural yields is also affecting the proportion of underweight children, which fell from 35.7 per cent in 1990 to 23.1 per cent in 2008.

Nevertheless, we must acknowledge that we are yet to record a sufficient rate of progress in reducing overall poverty. We have therefore recognized the need for more equitable, broad-based growth in order to facilitate a significant reduction in poverty in the country.

It is heartening to note that nearly 90 per cent of our children are now enrolled in school, but we also acknowledge that significant variation exists in primary school completion rates at the subnational level. Tangentially, there has been a gradual improvement in the proportion of girls enrolled in primary school, but not enough to meet set targets. Equally, although few women currently hold political office, the implementation of a new policy framework is poised to address critical issues in the area of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

I wish to state that Nigeria is reasonably on course to achieve the target of the MDG on reducing child mortality, with a drop from 100 to 75 per 1,000 live births between 2003 and 2008. Similarly, in the same period, the under-five mortality rate fell from 201 to 157 per 1,000 live births.

However, the issue of maternal health has been the most intractable and challenging, given that for most of the early years after the MDGs were set, Nigeria had one of the highest maternal mortality ratios in the world, hovering at 800 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births. Our most recent data, however,

suggest that our investments have recorded appreciable progress, with a drop in the maternal mortality ratio to 545 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births.

We are committed to making even faster progress. Since 2009, we have undertaken a massive deployment of an additional 2,488 midwives across the country, under the Midwifery Services Scheme, aimed at raising the proportion of births attended by skilled health workers. That will further accelerate progress in improving maternal health. Similarly, we have embarked on a community health insurance scheme, aimed at improving access to and delivery of health care for pregnant women and children under five, especially at the local level.

With regard to other diseases, we have also made appreciable progress. With a 99 per cent reduction in polio between 2009 and 2010, the eradication of the disease is now clearly in sight.

Similarly, we recorded a fall in the prevalence of HIV/AIDS from 5.8 per cent in 2001 to 4.2 per cent in 2008. We doubled the treatment of patients suffering from HIV/AIDS from 16.7 per cent in 2007 to 34.49 per cent in 2008. We are currently undertaking nationwide distribution of 63 million long-lasting insecticide bed nets that will impact the incidence of malaria. Global and bilateral funding resources have equally played key roles, for which the Government of Nigeria remains grateful.

Let me acknowledge that our environment is still seriously threatened. Between 2000 and 2010, our forested area shrank by a third, from 14.4 per cent to 9.9 per cent of the land area. Safe water and sanitation remain a challenge, contributing to some of the severe perennial outbreaks of epidemics in parts of the country. The present Administration remains committed to redressing the situation and continuing the discussion from the fifteenth Conference of the Parties on Climate Change.

On the macroeconomic front, the debt relief negotiated by Nigeria in 2005 has had a very positive impact on our environment. The debt-service ratio fell from 15.2 per cent of exports in 2005 to only 0.55 per cent in 2009. The ongoing innovations and improvements in governance, accountability and policy are likely to speed up progress towards the attainment of the MDGs. It should, however, be acknowledged that additional support is required as we seek to ensure coordination within a complex federal system; suboptimal coordination; the challenges of infrastructure, human resources and huge funding gaps; and in coping with external shocks such as the financial and food crises, as well as climate change.

Let me also add that the measurement of progress has itself posed challenges. Data gaps are only now being addressed, and missing or unreliable baseline data have made it difficult to assess progress on some indicators. Massive variation between our sub-national units, each facing a different set of challenges and priorities, has made communicating a national message on the MDGs particularly difficult. Scepticism about whether we can achieve the MDGs has also been widespread, generated by the relative nature of the targets, which place a huge burden on countries, like Nigeria, that started from a very weak baseline.

In rising to these challenges, we have taken a number of steps. We have prepared and are duly committed to implementing a new five-year countdown strategy road map to accelerate Nigeria's progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The countdown strategy is closely linked to Nigeria's medium- and long-term vision, the National Vision 20-2020, aimed at enabling Nigeria to join the league of the top 20 economies of the world by the year 2020. It contains four strategic imperatives for achieving the MDGs: improving the governance and accountability environment, strengthening coordination and cooperation among the three tiers and arms of Government, mobilizing and committing all communities and key stakeholders to the MDGs, and ensuring the effective mainstreaming of the MDGs into overall national and subnational development visions and plans.

We wish to reiterate the positions set out by the African Union in Kampala and the discussion held in Kigali on the MDGs under the auspices of President Paul Kagame of Rwanda as the co-Chair of the Secretary-General's MDG Advocacy Group. It is important that our international partners meet their commitments today if we are to accelerate our progress towards meeting the MDGs by 2015. We are confident that, working more efficiently and effectively and in a better-coordinated way with our partners in the utilization of global resources, progress towards attaining the MDGs will be achieved. As we advance towards achieving these initiatives, we ask for the international community's confidence in our approach,

and for its support at this critical acceleration point in our journey towards achieving the MDGs.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Patti Londoño, Vice-Minister for Multilateral Affairs of Colombia.

Ms. Londoño (Colombia): (*spoke in Spanish*): This High-level Plenary Meeting will allow us to take stock of the progress made, identify the gaps and agree on an agenda containing concrete steps to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other internationally agreed development goals, taking into account that we are only five years away from the established deadline. At the same time, we understand that our work and that of the United Nations will not end there.

In Colombia, the Millennium Development Goals are an essential part of social and development policies. We have integrated the MDGs into our strategies for poverty reduction and promotion of equality. Colombia is one of the three countries chosen to present their progress towards achieving the MDGs at a special activity of the United Nations Development Programme on Acceleration Frameworks, in the context of this summit. President Juan Manuel Santos Calderón will showcase our achievements for the international community. I will mention only the addition of more than 2.5 million students into the basic educational system in the last seven years, allowing us to reach universal coverage.

Today, we would like to share just one experience. In Colombia we have a success story in the Alta Guajira, in the North of the country, which brought comprehensive social progress to the Wayuu indigenous community through the development of a methodology based on the community's own ideas, and which, from beginning to end, included the community, the local and regional authorities, and the national Government. This initiative enjoyed the support of the Corporación Andina de Fomento. Within three years, with a total investment of $40 million and great administrative efficiency with costs of only 0.77 per cent, we have been able to transform the lives of 100,000 people with comprehensive solutions for safe drinking water, education, health, citizenship registration, clean energies and connectivity.

In the first month of President Santos's administration, we invited the agencies of the United Nations system to our country to join us in a pilot programme in 20 municipalities. We invited them to join their efforts and resources, initiatives and projects — which were scattered throughout the country and did not achieve their expected long-term impact — around a common strategy using the methodology applied in the Alta Guajira. With this invitation we wished to demonstrate, first, that the United Nations system can achieve the goals of coherence and of having all agencies working towards the same objective, in order to ensure the effective use of resources and to obtain sustainable results. At the same time, we wanted to implement, with the support of the Government, a local development project with high social impact on the communities benefited, so that they become the authors and owners of their own development.

We are convinced that comprehensive social intervention can achieve the desired changes in the people's living conditions and thus put them on a sustainable path towards poverty eradication and social cohesion. We believe in the relevance and success of a systemic approach, with measures and policies that in a very short space of time can arrive at comprehensive solutions to the problems of water, housing, education, health, citizenship registration, energy and communication for entire populations.

We are ready to share our local development methodology and the experience we are initiating with the United Nations, in which we also expect to be successful.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Khalid Abdalrazaq AlNafisee, Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia.

Mr. AlNafisee (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): It is my pleasure to convey to the Assembly at this important High-level Plenary Meeting the greetings of His Majesty King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, who has honoured me by requesting that I address the Assembly on his behalf.

Today's meeting offers an important opportunity to review and promote national and international efforts to attain the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), especially as we are approaching the 2015 deadline. In that regard, this past summer the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia issued its fifth MDG report, which contains our annual follow-up of MDG implementation. The five reports reflect the progress

we have made and describe our ongoing comprehensive efforts towards the attainment of the Goals. They also reflect our development efforts under the Kingdom's eighth five-year development plan, for 2005 to 2009, and under the ninth plan, for 2010 to 2014.

The MDGs form part of our national system of objectives and plans, including in the socio-economic and organizational dimensions. The five MDG reports follow up on the progress we have made and are structured to cover four aspects.

The first relates to the complementary nature of sustainable development and the MDGs, bolstered by overall development plans, in particular the eighth and ninth five-year development plans. The eighth and ninth plans are the cornerstone of our approach and have clarified our strategic vision and our efforts to organize and mobilize human and financial resources in order to attain the MDGs. They reflect the harmony between local and international partnerships aimed at establishing a world of peace, security and development in the context of the MDGs.

The second concerns strengthening the infrastructure necessary for attaining the MDGs. We have four models that illustrate our wide efforts in that regard: broadening women's participation in the economy; developing institutional mechanisms to reduce unemployment; increasing the scope of information and communications technology in line with decisions that foster development; and building a national climate conducive to participation by all segments of the private sector, including young people and women, in development programmes and projects.

Thirdly, it is clear from our MDG reports that we have more than crossed the threshold of attaining the Goals and that, in the light of present growth rates, we are ahead of schedule. The Kingdom has achieved tremendous results on the MDGs. Our successful efforts encompass a number of sectors such as eliminating extreme poverty, reducing suffering caused by hunger, guaranteeing primary education for all segments of society and ensuring the participation of men and women on an equal footing in education, health and other sectors.

Fourthly, we have adopted global development partnerships as a stable system based on the eighth and ninth plans. This system relies on the principles of regional and international cooperation and complementarity, which will promote economic and social development and maintain international peace and security. We provide as much assistance as we can to those in need throughout the world, based on our humanitarian values and legacy. In addition, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is among the major donors of and participants in international development assistance, which is a key element of our foreign and development policies.

In the period 1973 to 2009, assistance from Saudi Arabia to developing countries totalled some $99 billion to more than 95 countries in Africa, Asia and other parts of the world. Hence, the percentage of gross national product (GNP) allocated to official development assistance has surpassed the rate of 0.7 per cent adopted by the United Nations, reaching the level of 1.5 per cent, which makes my country one of the most active donors in this sphere. That assistance includes concessionary loans, grants, emergency relief assistance and debt forgiveness for some developing countries amounting to more than $6 billion.

In sum, we can say with certainty that our MDG strategy has emphasized a sustainable and comprehensive development discourse that has been translated into development policies and programmes. This has enabled our country to attain the majority of the MDGs before the 2015 deadline, while strengthening our international partnership for development.

The meeting rose at 1.30 p.m.